

Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF
THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1993



BANDWAGON

The Journal of the Circus Historical Society

Vol. 37, No. 1

January-February 1993

FRED D. PFENING, JR., EDITOR

Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor-Bill Biggerstaff, Production and Graphics

Joseph T. Bradbury, Associate Editor

BANDWAGON, The Journal of the Circus Historical Society (USPS 406-390) (ISSN 0005 4968), is published bi-monthly. Second class postage paid at Columbus, OH. Editorial, advertising and circulation office is located at 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, OH 43221. Phone (614) 294-5361. Advertising rates are: Full page \$95.00, half page \$55.00, quarter page \$35.00. Minimum ad is \$20.00. The BANDWAGON is produced using a Macintosh IIcx computer, DesignStudio and TypeStyler software.

Bandwagon subscription rates, \$19.00 to members and non-members in the United States, \$24.00 per year outside the United States. Single copies \$3.00 plus \$2.00 postage. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BANDWAGON, 1075 West Fifth Ave., Columbus, OH 43212.

Offices of the Circus Historical Society are located at 3477 Vienna Ct., Westerville, OH 43081. CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY-John F. Polacsek, President, 5980 Lannoo, Detroit, MI 48236; Fred Dahlinger, Jr., Vice President, 451 Roblee Rd., Baraboo, WI 53913; Dale C. Haynes, Secretary-Treasurer, 3477 Vienna Ct., Westerville, OH 43081.

DIRECTORS: Div. 1-Fred D. Pfening, Jr., 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, OH 43221 (Ohio-Mich.-Ind.); Div. 2-Copeland MacAllister, 30 Salem End Rd., #2A, Framingham, MA 01701 (N.H.-Maine-Vt.-Mass.-Ct.-Del.-R.I.); Div. 3-William L. Rhodes, 2528 Taylorsville Rd., Louisville, KY 40205 (N.Y.-N.J.-Pa.-Md.-D.C.-Va.-W. Va.-Ky.); Div. 4-Joseph T. Bradbury, 1453 Ashwoody Ct., N.E., Atlanta, GA 30319 (N.C.-S.C.-Ga.-Ala.-Fla.-Miss.-Tenn.-Ark.-La.); Div. 5-Guy J. Fiorenza, 2025 Andrews St., Rockford, IL 61103 (Wis.-Ill.-Minn.-Iowa-Mo.); Div. 6-Orin C. King, 5225 SW 20 Terrace #302, Topeka, KS 66604 (N.D.-S.D.-Kan.-Neb.-Okla.-Tex.); Div. 7-Joseph S. Rettinger, P.O. Box 20371, Phoenix, AZ 85036 (Col.-Mont.-Ida.-Wyo.-N. M.-Utah-Nev.-Ariz.); Div. 8-Michael D. Sporrer, 14537 N. E. 40th St. #H202, Bellevue, WA 98007 (Wa.-Ore.-Ca.-Hawaii); Div. 9-Dr. Gordon D. Brown, 7459 Saskatchewan Dr., Edmonton, Alb., Can. 76G-2A5 (All countries outside the United States.)

THIS MONTH'S COVER

One of the highlights of the 1992 season was the birth of a baby elephant on December 30 at the Ringling-Barnum elephant farm in Williston, Florida. Named Juliette after Kenneth Feld's youngest daughter, the youngster checked in at 198 pounds, and stood 38 1/2 inches tall. On January 10, 1993, the show was twice blessed when a young male elephant was born at the compound. He was named--and what else could it have been--Romeo.

Juliette is shown here with her mother Icky. Photo courtesy of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

1993 CHS CONVENTION

Plans are being made for the 1993 Circus Historical Society convention, to be held in Nashville, Tennessee, May 13 to 15. A number of members have come forward to assist in making this meeting a unique one. The circus will be the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey blue unit. The show will be at the Nashville Municipal Auditorium, only a few blocks from the convention site at the Doubletree Hotel. The downtown area allows for exploring the river front, State Capitol building, historical museum and a host of other attractions.

Two events which will be of great inter-

est are in the works. The first is a showing of circus lithographs from the Howard Tibbals collection. Tibbals has acquired a number of new items and is going share a classic display of Buffalo Bill, Adam Forepaugh, and other circus posters more than a century old. It will be a display that you will not want to miss.

The second event will be an open house at the Price residence. Those of you who know about the fabulous Price collection of magic posters will be astonished as how a house can be decorated. It is truly an amazing sight and an interesting side show tying magicians and circuses together.

We are still in need of papers for this convention. If any member wishes to provide a historical presentation please contact convention chairman John Polacsek, 5980 Lannoo, Detroit, Michigan (phone 313-885-7957) as soon as possible.

The cost of registration will be \$65 for a member and \$60 for guest. Please make checks payable to the Circus Historical Society.

Make your reservations as soon as possible at the Nashville Doubletree Hotel. The rates are \$69 for a single or double, \$79 for triple occupancy, and \$89 for four people in a room. Be sure to note you are a CHS member when registering. You need to make your reservation before April 14,

1993 to guarantee a room as this is a busy time in Nashville. The Doubletree Hotel's address is 2 Sovran Plaza, Nashville, Tennessee 37239. The hotel phone number is 615-747-4815.

Check your collection for items to be contributed to the auction, with proceeds to be used for publishing the *Bandwagon*.

NEW MEMBERS

L. B. Rinehart P. O. Box 135 Bethany, MO 64424	3800
George G. Holzman 47 Baywood Dr. Hampton Bays, NY 11946	3801
George Eddy P. O. Box 94318-70 Las Vegas, NV 89193	3802
Ed Plaut 13 Hawthorne Hill Rd. Ridgefield, CT 06877	3804
John W. Lewis 513 Giles Ave. Bridgeport, AL 35740	38804
Chris Somer Rt. 1, C#16 Sterling, NE 68443	3805
David F. Friedman P. O. Box 1630 Anniston, AL 36202	3806
George Riddle 225 East 11th St. New York, NY 10003	3807
Gwen Strauss 2 Rue Veron 75018 Paris, France	3808
Lynden Lyman 283 Upland Rd. Cambridge, MA 02140	3809
James S. Johnson P. O. Box 86 Williamsburgh, VA 23187	3910
Robert L. Zettlemoyer RD 2, Box 2082 Leesport, PA 19533	3811
Elizabeth Meissner P. O. Box 98 Ayer, MA 01432	3812
REINSTATED	
Conrad Rousseau 100 Utah Ave. Somerset, MA 02726	2218

**COLLECTOR
WILL BUY**

CIRCUS
CARNIVAL
WILD WEST
LITHOGRAPHS
POSTERS
MEMORABILIA

Cir. 1800 to 1940
Single or entire collections

Contact
**Allan C. Hill or
Joe Glasgow**

c/o 2477 Stickney Pt. Rd. #311B
Sarasota, FL 34231
Phone: 813-923-4758

AVAILABLE
BACK ISSUES OF
BANDWAGON

1966-Jan.-Feb.
1967-July-Aug., Nov.-Dec.
1968-All but Jan.-Feb.
1969-Jan.-Feb., July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.
1970-All but July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.
1971-All but May-June.
1972-All available.
1973-All but Jan.-Feb., Nov.-Dec.
1974-1975-All available.
1976-All but Jan.-Feb., Nov.-Dec.
1977-All but Mar.-Ap.
1978-84-All available.
1985-All but Nov.-Dec.
1986-All available.
1987-All but Nov.-Dec.
1988-All but Nov.-Dec.
1989-1992-All available.

Price is \$3.00 each. Add \$2.00 postage
one issue, \$3.00 more than one issue.
Please select substitutes in case we are
out of any of above.

**BANDWAGON BACK ISSUES
2515 DORSET RD.
COLUMBUS, OH 43221**

WANTED

FOR PERSONAL COLLECTION
ANYTHING RELATING TO:

**EMMETT KELLY
"WEARY WILLIE"
EMMETT KELLY,
JR.**

EKJ CIRCUS SOUVENIRS

Nollie W. Neill, Jr.
Post Office Box 38
Ennice, NC 28623

member CFA CHS CMB

GERMAN NATIONAL



IN THE TRUE EUROPEAN CIRCUS TRADITION, ONE RING, 2500 PLUS SEATS,
150 FOOT ROUND, 193 FOOT FRONT. BUY A COMPLETE SHOW FOR YOUR FAIR
OR SPECIAL EVENT, OR LEASE THE TENT ALONE, WITH OR WITHOUT SEATS.

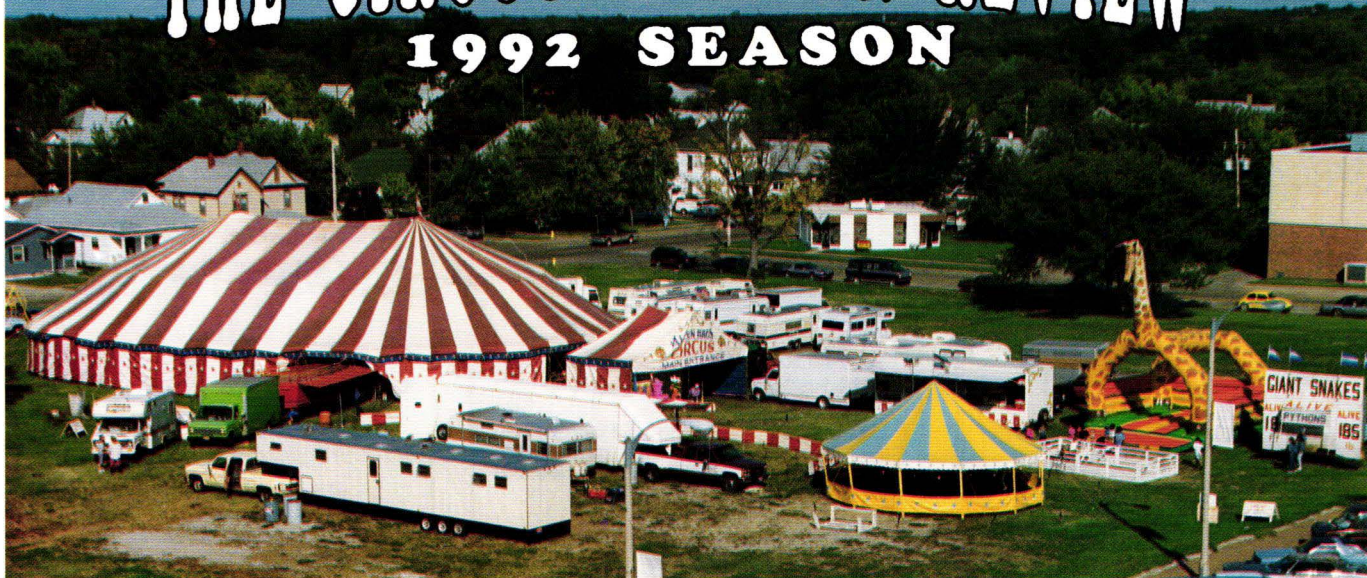
INTERNATIONAL BOOKING AGENCY FOR PARKS, FAIRS, HOTELS, SPORTS
SHOWS, NIGHT CLUBS AND CIRCUS ACTS.

PLEASE CONTACT:
Jeanette Williams

2011 61st Street
Sarasota, FL 34243
Phone: (813) 351-6709
Fax (813) 351-1753

THE CIRCUS YEAR IN REVIEW

1992 SEASON



By Fred D. Pfening III

In spite of the weak economy, the season, in general, exceeded expectations. At year's end the results were mixed with some concerns struggling while others triumphed. No major shows failed, and the smaller ones that closed early did so for non-economic reasons such as lack of a strong advance department. Presidential election years have historically been bad ones for circuses and while the impact of the election was impossible to measure, it certainly had some influence, especially in making television advertising time, an important marketing tool for many shows, more difficult to obtain as the political parties bought up huge amounts, especially during primary season and in the fall. Despite the double whammy of the recession and the election, the year was, in fact, a rather mundane one in which business as usual, albeit with a little belt tightening, was main the financial theme.

Another trend during the year was the increased influence of the new wave circuses such as Big Apple and Cirque du Soleil on the rest of the industry. While the American public's standards of what a circus should be have been raised in subtle ways over the past few years, the impact was more noticeable in 1992 than in other seasons. On numerous circuses the quality of the performance—the lighting, the music, the costumes, the pacing, the mix of acts—was improved and given more thought than in the past. Other shows emulated Big Apple's example and imposed a theme on their performance. Ringling, for example, invested heavily in

high tech lighting, had fewer announcements, and devoted far more of its show than usual to its feature attraction.

In other news, the assault from the animal welfarists continued as many shows experienced picketing. Toronto became first big city on the continent to ban exotic animal acts. One encouraging sign on the animal welfare front was the passage of the Animal Enterprise Protection Act which required restitution for raids by animal rights extremists in which the damages were above \$10,000, the intent being that the stiff monetary damages would curtail the terrorism.

The outdoor branch of the business, while no longer the backbone of the industry, was still a highly visible and viable means of presentation. With some notable exceptions the tenters were a small town and suburban phenomenon as urbanities generally saw their circuses indoors. The tented circus continued to have a strong grip on the American imagination, so much so that tents and circuses were still strong associated by the general public even though appearing under a pavilion had ceased being the circus's main venue years ago.

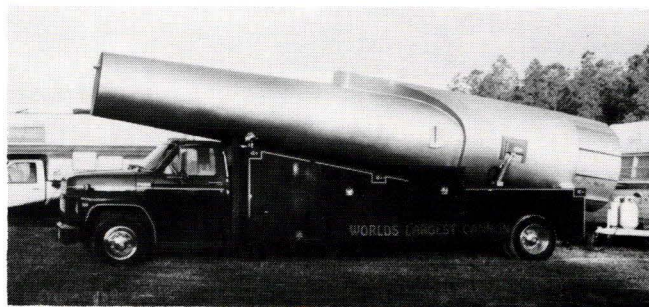
The Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus, owned by John Pugh and Doug Holwadel, opened in its home

Allen Bros. Circus on a nice lot on a sunny day in a small town. Parsons, Kansas, October 10, 1992. Tim Tegge photo.

town of Deland, Florida on March 28. Playing its usual route, it quickly moved up the eastern coast, reaching the mid-Atlantic states in May. New York and New England took up most of the summer before the show turned back toward home in September. After a month and a half in the deep South, the troupe hit Florida on November 9, finishing the year at Palm Beach Gardens on December 2.

Travelling behind about 27 steering wheels, mostly semis, the show covered a bit over 9000 miles during the 37 week season. Almost all the engagements were for two or more days, including a three day stand in the parking lot of Queens, New York's Shea Stadium. New equip-

A new feature on the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros Circus was this cannon owned by Elvin Bale. Photo taken at Naples, Florida during November 20-22 engagement. Joe Bradbury photo.





Beatty-Cole canvas spool truck at Naples, Florida. Joe Bradbury photo.

ment included a band stand, an elephant semi trailer, and two fork lifts.

The performance was similar to the previous year's with Kathleen Ulmstead working the tigers, the Dielkas sisters on rolling globes, the Flying Rodriguez, the Venko Lilov bears, Dawnita and Gloria Bale with liberty horses, and Fred Logan with ten elephants. It was the veteran Logan's 50th season in the business. Jimmy James was ringmaster and James Haverstrom led a nine piece band. Ten clowns provided the mirth, up from eight in 1991.

A notable new feature was the Elvin Bale cannon, the first on a tent show in many years. Cannonball Sean Thomas demonstrated his speciality in New York's Central Park on the *Live with Regis and Kathie Lee* TV show in July, almost certainly the first time a man flew in that fabled real estate.

The show honored passes from Dick Garden's Big Circus in New Jersey in early June, a smart PR move. Early in the year, co-owner Pugh gave Monaco's Prince Ranier a white tiger cub for his private zoo on the grounds of the palace.

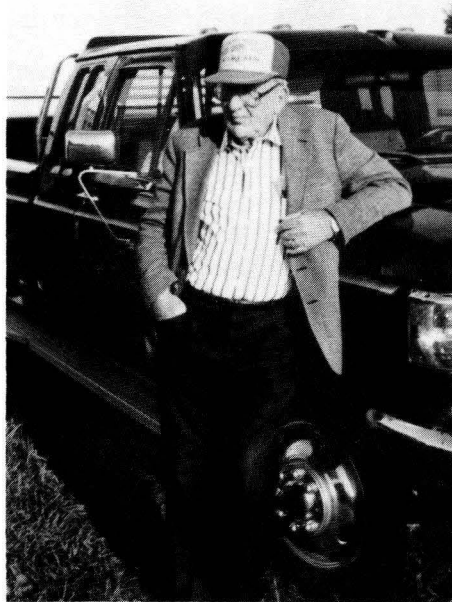
The Carson and Barnes Circus, owned by D. R. Miller and his family, started off in Paris, Texas on March 21, frolicking in

Unloading the quarter poles on Carson and Barnes at Georgetown, Kentucky on September 27. Bill Rhodes photo.



Midwest before heading south through Arkansas and Louisiana en route to a November 15 closing at Gladewater, Texas.

A marvel of efficiency, the show was



The revered D. R. Miller, owner of Carson and Barnes Circus. Photo taken at Claire, Michigan, August 22. Dale Haynes photo.

the last of the big one night stand field-shows that once prowled the countryside. Only four two day stands were played, the rest being one dayers. The troupe moved 16,130 miles with an average jump of 68 miles per jump. Thirty-eight show owned vehicles moved the company.

The show used a 120 foot round top tent with five 40 foot and two 15 foot middle sections. Under it appeared five rings in which, among others, appeared the Flying Cavallinis and the Flying Ramirez, rider Lucy Loyal, the Chimal family on the perch pole, and the Rosales family with two wheels of destiny. Wil-

that state and neighboring Oklahoma through May 9 when it turned west for stands in Southwest and Mountain states. Turning east in June the show reached the Midwest by late July where it remained until late September. After dipping into Kentucky and Tennessee, it played a few October dates in the

liam Bradley Jewell was the new lion and tiger presenter. Ross Raborn was the ringmaster, and, alas, the music was on tape. The new spec had an Aztec theme.

The impressive corralled menagerie, a throwback to the big railers of the 1920s and 1930s, included 23 elephants, three of which were Africans; a pigmy hippo; a white rhinoceros; a giraffe named Teddie; camels; guanacos; and other lead stock. The midway had a pony ride, a train ride, moon bounce, midget horse pit show, snake and spider pit shows, pot belly pig ding show, and Dot Stone's souvenir stand.

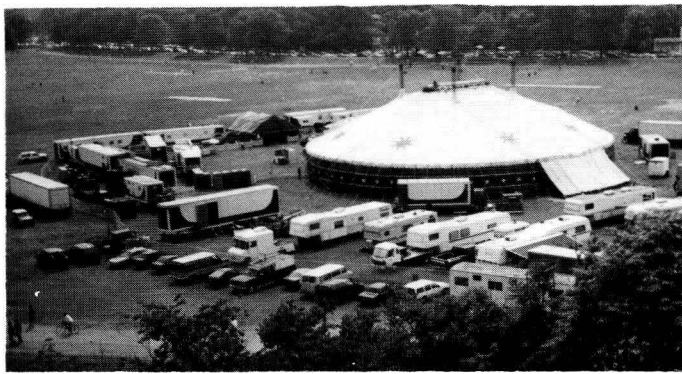
The show was the subject of a front page article in the August 31 *Wall Street Journal*. The Byrd Family Tent, honoring co-owners Geary and Barbara Byrd, was raised in Jacksonville, Illinois when the show played there in late July. Carson and Barnes was host circus for the CHS convention in Claire, Michigan in August. It was D. R. Miller's 56th season as a show owner, a record in American field show annals.

Circus Vargas followed its traditional itinerary by opening in Arizona in January and moving into California where it appeared through August. The troupe then headed east, landing in the Chicago area in early September. A series of big jumps brought the show to Texas where it appeared through late November before going to the barn after Las Cruces, New Mexico on November 23-25.

For the last decade Vargas had been one of a trio of big, three ring tenters—the other two of course being Beatty and Carson and Barnes—but this season owners Roland Kaiser and Joe Muscarello cut the exhibition to one ring. The performance appeared under the reworked 1991 big top which became a 150 foot round top with one 50 foot straight section after a number of middles sections were cut out. The move doubtless cut the show's nut, but California's wettest spring in five years, and poor business in October and November hurt receipts.

The performance included veterans Wayne Regan with the lions and tigers, and Rex Williams with the elephants. Others on the bill were the Yankovi troupe, teeterboard and Russian swing; Rudy and Sue Lenz, chimps; Olate Bros., dogs; and the Flying Rodogels. In an odd personnel switch Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the Don Johnson elephants joined the show for part of November when Williams and the Vargas elephants were leased out to George Coronas for the Ft. Worth Shrine date.

The Big Apple Circus was the class of the business as it had been for a decade. It started the season in Queens on March 24, and moved to Boston for a month in early April. After three New York City area



Big Apple Circus at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx in June. Paul Gutheil photo.

dates, the show made a big jump to Columbus for a June 20-25 engagement. Stands in New York state and New England followed before the spring-summer trek ended on August 2. The winter season began near Washington on September 24 followed by the big October 22 to January 10 run at New York's Lincoln Center. It was a good year at the box office as the Gotham stand did well, and business was up at some of the summer dates, notably Columbus where the show had near capacity crowds.

The spring show was a reprise of the 1991 winter offering featuring a Coney Island theme. Cast members included Dana Kaseeva, hula hoopist; Elena Panova, aerialist; the Rios brothers, Risley; Bill Woodcock and Vanessa Thomas, elephants; and the Flying Vazquez. Barry Lubin, aka Grandma, left the company after this run.

The new production, entitled "Goin' Places," maintained the high standards of previous shows as the lighting, pacing, music, costumes, and act mix were all excellent. A highlight of the performance was three generations of Schumanns in the ring as father Max joined daughter Katja and granddaughter Katherine Schumann Binder in a dressage act. Other acts

Cirque du Soleil on the beach in Santa Monica, California in October. Jerry Cash photo.



included Marie Pierre Benac in a superb Russian barre act; Tunga, a Mongolian contortionist; Vladimir Tsarkov, a juggling contortionist; the Egorov troupe in a fabulous aerial casting act; Johnny Peers and his dogs; and the Buckles Woodcock elephants featuring Vanessa Thomas.

Founder Paul Binder was ringmaster, and Rick Albani led the band. Linda Hudes again wrote much of the show's music, solidifying her reputation as the foremost composer of circus music in the country.

Cirque du Soleil had its biggest year ever, bring its unique blend of the Las Vegas, Broadway, and Sarasota to far more people than ever before. From March to November a unit using the Le Cirque Reinvente theme, which was used from 1987 to 1990, combined with Switzerland's venerable Circus Knie. Titled Knie and Cirque du Soleil, the combination marked the first time Soleil appeared on the same bill with animals.

The North American tented unit, titled Saltimbanco, opened in Montreal, the show's winter quarters, on April 23. Dates in San Francisco, San Jose and Santa Monica followed before the December 20 closing. This unit featured typical Soleil fare such as contortion, trapeze, the Russian swing, tight rope walking, hand balancing, clowning and no animals, all juiced up by New Age music, costumes and lighting. The effect was electrifying. Sign of the Times Department: the October 9 performance at Santa Monica was a benefit for the Elizabeth Taylor Aids Foundation.

A third unit appeared in eight Japanese cities from May 22 to August 31. Sponsored by Fuji Television and Kirin Beer to the tune of \$40 million, the top ticket was \$96 for the indoor dates. By all accounts it was a smashing success.

To top off the year, the Nouvelle Experience show of a few years ago opened under a big top behind the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas. Soleil took the town by storm, advertising heavily in off beat media such as a giant television screen in the baggage claim area of the airport. The Mirage unit also did land office business.

Soleil was able to clone its performance

more easily than virtually any other show, in part because much of each presentation was an ensemble which presented basic circus skills with high production values rather than technically difficult routines. For that reason the performance was far easier to replicate than one which emphasized high level virtuosity such as Big Apple. Much of the credit for the company's explosive growth belonged to founder Guy Laliberte who, among other activities in 1992, found time to be a judge at the Monte Carlo Circus Festival.



Program for combined Knie and Cirque du Soleil shows. Mary Rower collection.

The Great American Circus had a winter romp through Florida from mid-January to early February before beginning for real on March 2 near Sarasota. After working its way north via the deep South the show reached the mid-Atlantic states by May, and was in New York and New England by June. Appearances were made in the Midwest in late summer before the show meandered south to a November 21-22 closing in Sarasota.

In all, the show played in twenty-two states, and traveled over 14,000 miles. Ohio was on the itinerary for the first time since 1989, and Louisiana for the first time ever in the spring. Owned by Allan C. Hill, Tim Frisco was road manager while Dorita and Walter Estes ran the ticket and office wagon.

The year got off to a bad start as the Asian elephant Janet went berserk while giving rides at Palm Bay, Florida on February 1, and was put down. The show and the industry received a century's worth of bad press, and many showmen feared the incident would destroy the elephant ride business. Fortunately, it turned out to be a typically American 15

minute wonder, and although the show was picketed by animal activists throughout the season, the long term impact of the incident appeared to be minimal.

In-ring talent included Louise Rossell with her leopards, Donna Moos with a cloud swing, Eddie Steeples with his bears and chimps, Ramon Espana on the rola bola, and Jorge Rossell with his comedy car. Brain LaPalme, the ringmaster, also ate fire and did magic. Music was provided by one of Lee Maloney's computerized systems.

After opening in its home town of Hugo, Oklahoma on March 21 the Kelly-Miller Circus quickly headed for the Midwest and the mid-Atlantic states where it exhibited through July. The second half of July and all of August were spent in western Canada before returning to the Midwest before the season's end at Henryetta, Oklahoma on October 23-25.

The midway had a moon bounce, a concession wagon, novelty stand, pony sweep, elephant ride, and a side show, the latter basically a magic show and menagerie. The big top was an 80 foot round top with three forty foot middles. Co-owner David Rawls was back with the show as general manager after spending the previous season on the advance.

The single ring performance featured Ron and Chris Pace with their aerial cradle and perch poles displays, Wolfgang Bruno with two elephant presentations, Dutch Crawford with liberty horses, Ervin Hall on the unicycle and with his baboons, the Vital family with a bow and arrow routine, and the Kiss family with their excellent band balancing act. Billy Rawls was ringmaster and Marshall Eckleman led the band.

Roberts Bros. Circus started out on March 12 in Florida and was in Pennsylvania by May. After stands in Ohio and West Virginia, the show headed back to its traditional territory in New England before heading home for a late October closing. The company was managed by Jeff Earl and his wife Leanne who was in charge of the office. Doris Earl, widow of the founder, was front door boss and manager when her son Jeff was away.

The physical layout was little changed from the previous year with the big top being a 70 foot round top with two 30s and a 40 foot middle sections. The mid-



Seat wagon on Allan C. Hill's Great American Circus. Bill Rhodes photo.

way had a pony ride, el-ephant ride, snake pit show, concession stand, moon bounce, novelty stand, and a small petting zoo.

Performers included Kurt and Heidi Casady who did aerial cradle and perch pole routines, Bill Schreiber with a pony drill, Ken Benson with a cowboy exhibition and the elephant presentation, Les Duvans on rolling globes, and Yvonne Stephens with a llama, a pony, and potbellied pigs. Schreiber was also ringmaster and Rod Wainwright was producing clown.

Little of Franzen Bros. route was available, but the show appeared to have played its usual territory in the South and East in the spring, in the Midwest in the summer, and back South in the fall. This one moved on 14 units, three of which pulled metal bleachers. The midway had a pony sweep, elephant ride, a moon bounce, a ticket and concession trailer and a menagerie.

Owner Wayne Franzen was a jack of all trades and master of many as he worked the cats, the elephants, and a camel and liberty llama routine in the performance.

The Kelly-Miller side show, the last one on a tenter. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.



Other actors were the Ayala family, and juggler Casey Cainan. Ringmaster Paul Lee also performed illusions.

The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus opened in Arizona in March and exhibited in that state and California through late May. Working its way eastward, the show reached Illinois in late June, staying in the Midwest through Sep-

tember. Appearances in Arkansas, Texas and New Mexico followed before the October 23 ending at Duncan, Arizona. The route covered about 11,000 miles. Early season rain hurt the gate, although business picked up when the weather improved.

The show used a new 70 round top with a 40 middle purchased from A1 Tent in Sarasota. On the midway were el-



Franzen Bros. Circus elephant semi-trailer. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.

ephant rides, a petting zoo, pony sweep, the ever popular moon bounce, and an office-concession semi. The troupe moved behind six to eight steering wheels. In September while making a jump in Iowa, the workingman's sleeper caught fire and six members of the work crew lost their belongings. The fire was believed to have been caused by a cigarette burning in a bunk.

The ninety minute presentation included Heidi Wendany with dogs and with a dressage horse, Ken Taylor on single trapeze and trampoline, Oran Luke on the high wire, Jens Larsen in hand balancing and Roman rings routines, magician Richard Schrepfer, Terrell Jacobs with a donkey and dog, and Jim Zaichek with the elephant. Owner Red Johnson was the announcer.

The King Royal Circus was in Texas in the spring, the Plains states early summer, the Midwest in mid and late summer, and the South in the fall before closing in Texas



Culpepper and Merriweather on the lot at Hemet, California on April 22. Jerry Cash photo.

on November 9. During at least September and October the show broke into two units, the second one using the old company name of Ford Bros. Among the few known Ford dates were one in Kansas in September and another in Texas in October. On December 3 King Royal reopened for an eight week tour of the Hawaii.

The show moved on 18 trucks, all 5th wheels to avoid Department of Transportation regulations. Among the exotic animals on the inventory were three elephants. A giraffe and two kangaroos were added in May. Among the acts were owner John "Gopher" Davenport with the cat act, and wife Gee Gee on the single trapeze. When a reviewer saw the Ford Bros. unit in October the roster included Bela Tabak with a peacock act, a liberty llama routine, and a barnyard number. Tony Cristiani was manager of this unit which used a two pole 60 by 80 foot square end tent.

The Hawaii performance included Tabak and his peacocks, Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the Don Johnson elephants, the Guerorguievs in their hand balancing routine, Adolpho Ponce on the slack wire, and the Flying Alfredos. The show's cats and llamas couldn't leave the mainland.

Bentley Bros. Circus, owned by Tommy Bentley and Chuck Clancey, had four tours in 1992. The first was a group of Florida dates which were played under canvas for two or three days each in February and March. The West Coast tour, mostly in grandstands, followed

Roberts Bros. midway on a sunny August day in New Jersey.



from April to June. The Eastern and Midwestern swing rumbled from mid-June to late September, and was also mainly in grandstands. The company finished the year with a string of Christmas shows in the Philadelphia area.

On the spring run in California and Arizona

the talent entailed Roverta Winn, slide for life; Baron Julius Von Uhl, ten lions; George Allen, single trapeze; the Posso family, high wire; Jimmy and Tepa Hall, bears; Diane Moyer, elephants and liberty horses; and the Flying Montoyas. Jerry Eyestone was ringmaster; Bruce Warner, producing clown; Jim Miller, band leader; and Wally Naughtin, road manager. The personnel on the summer march was similar, although Eddie Schmitt had his tigers on the dates.

Allen Bros. began in Texas in March, played the deep South in the spring, the Midwest in the summer, and the Plains states in the fall before closing in mid-November in Texas. Dropping its semis, it moved on eleven straight bed trucks and trailers to avoid DOT regulations, and made average jumps of about 35 miles a day.

The midway had a concession trailer-ticket office, petting zoo, moon bounce, pony sweep, and a snake pit show. The tent was an 80 by 120 European style push pole which sat about 1500. Among the new equipment was a workingman's sleeper, a pony trailer, and an elephant trailer.

Until he left the show in early July Tom Thompson worked the cat act, the elephant act, and a comedy horse act. He was replaced by owner Allen Bedford who worked the cats as Wild Bill Allen. Other actors included Ron and Robin Dykes who rode unicycles, juggled, and did slack wire, and clowns Eddie and Joyce Sherman. Veteran Phil Chandler was ringmaster for most of the season. Tim and Gigi Tegge joined in late August, working publicity two days ahead.

Vidbel's Olde Tyme Circus started in late April and ran until late September, all in the East. The opener was for a conservative Jewish group in Brooklyn. No females were permitted to perform at this stand, and seating was segregated by gender. While the roster changed a bit as the season progressed, acts included George and Lauren Bertini on unicycles and slack

wire, Tracy Bannister on web, Susan Vidbel with her trained macaws and cockatoos, Kinte's baboons, Bobby Fairchild with his whip and impalement routine, clown Mike Snider, and Bill Morris with his elephants. Billy Martin was ringmaster and Winn Murra had the band.

The show suffered a blow down at Columbia, Maryland in late April, and blue skyed it for a few weeks until a replacement top arrived. Show personnel, particularly owners Al and Joyce Vidbel and Billy Martin, were the subject of an article in the *New Yorker* in April.

Reid Bros. Circus premiered in Brookings, Oregon on April 9, and played in Big Sky country, the Plains states, and the upper Midwest until closing in Fairbault, Minnesota on June 20. The fall Texas run for police groups lasted from September 1 to October 12. The spring tour had been cut to ten weeks from the fifteen of previous years.

Acts under the spring big top were Wilsson Barnes with the Don Johnson cats, the Flying Lunas, Kathy Garcia with dogs, Oscar Garcia in the space wheel, and Bobby Gibbs with the Don Johnson elephants. New additions to the payroll for the Texas stands were Patti and Carl Reed with their dogs, Adolpho Ponce on the slack wire, and the Castrojon duo with their wheel act. On both tours Gibbs was ringmaster which must have been like watching Van Gogh paint. In April the Reid Bros.-Bobby Gibbs CFA Tent was raised in Oregon honoring show owners John and Betty Reid and their beloved elephant man and announcer.

The Hall of Fame Circus played a flock of Indiana towns from June 20 to August 23. Produced by Joe Bauer for the benefit of Peru, Indiana's Circus Hall of Fame, the show appeared under his one ring big top. At the Peru opening the actors included Lance Ramos with cats and an elephant, Don Otto on the comedy trampoline, Joe and Betty Naud with their chimps, Carl and Patti Reed with their dogs and high school horse, the Helikons on the giant swing, riders from Peru's Circus City Circus, and clowns Skin and Bones. John Fugate was the ringmaster and Rich Rosio led the band. The in-ring personnel changed during the run.

Circus Flora had a handful of engagements: in St. Louis, New York state, and Lexington which added up to about six weeks work. Headed by David Balding, the tenter repeated the previous year's pirate theme which continued the saga of the 19th century Baldini family's circus adventures. This always intriguing one ringer's performance went back and forth between the play's story line, and traditional circus routines. Among the talent were Giovanni Zoppe doing his loop the

loop turn, the Flying Wallendas with Tino Wallenda, clown Larry Pisoni, and Phil and Francine Schacht with their elephant Dondi who performed along with the show's own Flora. Late in the year Grant Andree was named managing director.

The Royal Lichtenstein Circus, founded by Jesuit Priest Nick Weber, was a side walled outreach effort by the Catholic church. While the one ringer doubtless had an extensive route, the only dates to appear in the trade and fan press were a few in the Midwest in July and August. The hour and a half performance featured juggling, rola bola, magic, aerial display, goats, and a miniature horse named Dan Rice. Fables which made moral points were also part of this unique exhibition.

Phills Bros. Circus was in New Jersey and Pennsylvania from early May until late August. It moved on three show owned vehicles, and appeared under a 60 by 90 foot tent. Sisters Joanne Wilson and Linda Herrman put on much of the show as between them they worked ponies, an

ifornia festival in July with Lynn Polke's hula hoop routine, Cable's foot juggling, and clowns Dick Monday and Cheri Sicard.

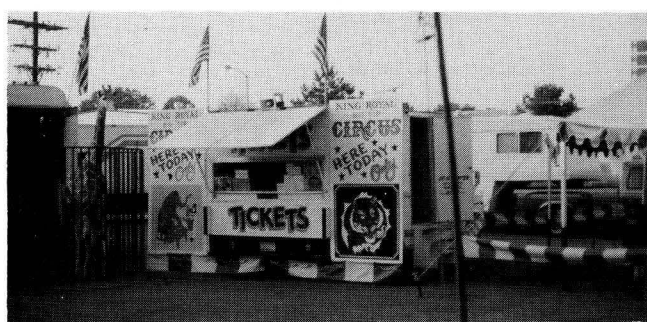
Walker Bros. Circus was a new entry. Owned by brothers John Walker Jr. and Jerry Walker, the show used a tent purchased from Alberto Zoppe. Moving on one semi and three straight bed trucks, it opened in Kingsland, Georgia on April 2 and closed in Indiana in late June. The show intended to run until early September, but a lack of auspices led to the early closing as the show decided to head for the barn rather than playing dates without sponsors. The one ring performance included Bill Brickle and his poodles, Gene and Eleanor Mendez on the high wire, Mike Rice with his horse, and Frank Murray with two elephants and a camel.

The Big Circus, a generic title if there ever was one, was another new outdoor show, although it was side walled. It began life in Exton, Pennsylvania on May 11. While the original route was to run until July 28, by the end of May in New Jersey it was all over. Acts included Lance Ramos with his cage act and el-

phant routine, and the Lang family with knockabout comedy, juggling and tee-board.

This one brought back memories of owner Dick Garden's last foray into the outdoor show business with the Toby Tyler Circus in the mid-1980s. Problems with permits led to the cancellation of a booking in Pottstown, Pennsylvania on May 21, but really big trouble came shortly thereafter when a sponsor withdrew because the show didn't have adequate liability insurance, and another backed out over the terms of the auspices agreement.

David Mobbs' Circus USA had its annual Miami date in early October under a rented Harold Barnes tent. Among the acts was the Flying Cortez. Charles Schlarbaum led the band. The Rimwood Circus, headed by Ramon Espana and Peggy Mills, had an under canvas



King Royal Circus ticket wagon with giraffe on left at Dubach, Louisiana on October 27. Jack Painter photo.

date at Englewood, Florida in late November where they used Dianne Moyers and her animal acts. Brian LaPalme was ringmaster. Espana and Manual Gonçalves ran a circus at a tourist attraction in Branson, Missouri which was scheduled to run all summer, but they gave up on it in July. Ring Bros. Circus, headed by Whitey Black, Joe King and Chuck Fuller, was to open in Auburn, Nebraska on September 25 and play for six week. The Auburn opening was cancelled for lack of liability insurance; whether any of the rest of the route was played is unknown. Armando Farfan's Circus Farfan apparently had a few engagements in Southern California in the spring, but did poorly and cancelled the remainder of the tour.

Circuses which performed indoors provided employment to more performers than any other branch of the business. They also appeared in the widest spectrum of population centers—ranging from the giant metropolises which saw Ringling-Barnum to the big cities which watched Shrine circuses to the smallest county seats which viewed one ring school shows. This segment's growth

When Al Vidbel's Olde Tyme Circus appeared in Brooklyn for a conservative Jewish group on April 20 the seating was segregated by gender as men and women entered by separate entrances. Paul Gutheil photo.



Walker Bros. Circus ticket wagon in the show's Sarasota winter quarters. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.

elephant, a long rein horse, dogs, doves, goats, llamas, foot juggled and web. Other acts included Kim Sue Wong on web, and John Frazier with a rope twirling and whip act. Frazier was also the ringmaster, and Chris Prie had the band. Owner Bill Phillips clowned.

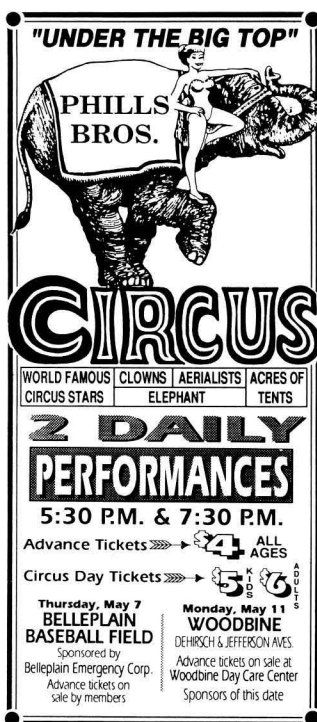
The L. A. Circus was a non-profit circus arts workshop organization funded by the city of Los Angeles. The side walled show had a dozen bookings in the Los Angeles area, and was on occasion used by local charitable organizations for fund raising proposes. When it played a hospital in October the acts included clowns Dick Monday, Danise Payne and Bob Zraic; foot juggler Chester Cable; hand balancer Frederic Leyd; trapezist Rebecca Perez; and Tai the elephant presented by Gary and Kari Johnson. Wini McKay was producer, and Doug Lyon was marketing director. McKay and Cable also produced a circus, independently of the L. A. Circus it would seem, for a Fountain Valley, Cal-

changed the calendar for cir-
cusing, making the first few
months of the year a more
active period than mid-
summer. Without doubt
more people saw circuses in-
doors than out, an inter-
esting commentary on the
changing nature of both so-
ciety and circuses.

Always the Greatest Show
on Earth, Ringling Bros. and
Barnum and Bailey's 122nd
edition, the Blue unit,
opened at the Venice, Flori-
da winter quarters on De-
cember 27, 1991. Migrating
northward, the show
reached the metropolitan
New York City area on
March 4, playing there
through May 3 at three dif-
ferent venues. Other dates in
the East preceded a 1433
miles jump from Phila-
delphia to Tulsa in June,
which was followed by a
1348 mile hop from Tulsa to
Phoenix. The show stayed in
the West until October, including two
months in California. After two other
Midwestern cities, the year ended in Chi-
cago on November 29.

The big feature was a group of Mon-
golian performers who put on almost the
entire second half of the show with ten
acts, including a strong man routine, rid-
ing, and contortion. Other performers in-
cluded Wade Burck with thirteen tigers,
the Panteleenkos in a giant strap act, Alex
Gautier with sixteen elephants, and Ber-
nice Collins with liberty horses. Missing
from the line up for the first time in de-
cades was a flying trapeze act as Ringling
decided to go without one after last min-
ute immigration problems prevented a
flying act from joining. Jim Ragona was
the ringmaster and Dave Killinger was
the new band leader.

Of special note was a singing group of
three teenagers called N/Motion which
had recorded a rock and roll album on the
Warner Bros. label. They sang at various
times during the performance, and at
some stands gave mini-concerts after the
big show. The attempt to appeal to the
teen and pre-teen audience failed as N/
Motion was dropped at the second to last
stand of the season with plans to replace
them with flying trapeze acts in 1993. It
was the first time Ringling had heavily re-
routined a performance in the Feld era.
While circus fans becried the advent of
the singers, in reality they did little to
hurt or help the performance. Critic Herb
Clement summed it up when he called
them a "benign intrusion" on the rest of
show. Their failure brought to mind Mr.



"UNDER THE BIG TOP"

PHILLIS BROS.

CIRCUS

WORLD FAMOUS CLOWNS AERIALISTS ACRES OF
CIRCUS STARS ELEPHANT TENTS

2 DAILY PERFORMANCES

5:30 P.M. & 7:30 P.M.

Advance Tickets **\$4** ALL AGES
Circus Day Tickets **\$5** ALL AGES

Thursday, May 7
BELLEPLAIN BASEBALL FIELD
Sponsored by
Belleplain Emergency Corp.
Advance tickets on
sale by members

Monday, May 11
WOODBINE
DEHRSCHE & JEFFERSON AVES.
Advance tickets on sale at
Woodbine Day Care Center
Sponsors of this date

birthday in Denver on October 9. Gifts in-
cluded an elephant sized necktie and a
giant carton of peanuts.

The Red unit opened its second tour in
Miami on December 27, 1991. Major en-
gagements included Washington, Bal-
timore, Dallas, Houston, Detroit, Boston,
and Cleveland where the the itinerary
ended on November 22. It moved on 47
railroad cars.

This was the second year for headliner
David Larible, an Italian clown. Among
others on the bill were his sister Vivien
Larible on the single trapeze, Lisa Du-
fresne with a barnyard animal review, the
Flying Vargas and the Flying Espanas,
Marco and Philip Peers in
a wheel of destiny, Marco
Peters with the cage act,
Tina Gebel with liberty
horses, Jon Weiss and
Phillip Peters with a dou-
ble shot cannon, and
Mark Oliver Gebel with
the elephants.

Owner Kenneth Feld
celebrated the 10th an-
niversary of his family's
buy back of the circus
from Mattel Toy. In the
spring Feld signed a deal
with George Lucas to pro-
duce a live show repre-
senting Lucas' characters
from Star Wars, Indiana
Jones, and other Lucas
movies. This production
was scheduled to appear
in Japan in the spring of

Mistin Jr., another mu-
sical dud on Ringling in
1953. It also pointed out
that while the genius of
the circus is its ability to
incorporate a wide spec-
trum of entertainment
into a cohesive and ap-
pealing whole, there are
limits to what can suc-
cessfully appear in the
ring.

Newspaper ad for
Phillis Bros. Circus for two
dates in New Jersey in
early May. Bill Elbirn col-
lection.

The Blue unit traveled
on the biggest Ringling
train since the under can-
vas days: 49 cars, 14 flats,
1 bi-level, 3 stocks, 1 stor-
age, and 30 passengers.
The show worked el-
ephant rides at some cit-
ies early in the year. King
Tusk celebrated his 50th

1993. Clown college graduated its 25th
class. Ringling created a Department of
Educational Services to offer seminars to
teachers to show them how to integrate
the circus into the curriculum, rem-
iniscent of what Klara K. Knecht did in
the early 1930s for the same organization.

It was all out and over for the Venice
winter quarters as Ringling moved to the
Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa after
the deterioration of the rail line between
Sarasota and Venice had reached such a
point that the show trains could no longer
safely travel over it. State inspectors man-
dated a list of repairs necessary to reopen
the line, but neither the city, the railroad
nor the circus was willing to spend the
\$1,500,000 necessary to upgrade the track.
When the Red show train went into Tam-
pa after Cleveland in late November it
marked another new chapter in the his-
tory of the Greatest Show on Earth. Inter-
estingly, the show spent 32 winters each
in its first two Florida homes, Sarasota
and Venice.

The year ended on a high note when
the elephant Icky gave birth to 198 pound
female named Juliette on December 30.
The baby, named after Feld's nine year
old daughter, was the first elephant birth
in the Ringling or Barnum organization
since 1882. The next day, the show had a
4 page insert in *USA Today* to celebrate
the 200th anniversary of the American cir-
cus. It was probably the most expensive
newspaper ad ever published.

Circuses sponsored by Shrine temples
and other fraternal and charitable or-
ganizations, notably police and fire
groups, were an important part of the
business. The generic title "Shrine Circus"
hindered most showmen from de-
veloping name recognition in the public's
mind, and created the unfortunate situa-
tion where many pro-
ducers competed on
price rather than mer-
it in negotiating con-
tracts. Nevertheless,
many of these cir-
cuses were of high
quality, featuring acts
formerly on Ringling-
Barnum, Big Apple,
and major European
companies. Many, if
not most, performers
preferred Shrine
dates to tented ones
because they gener-

Newspaper ad for
the L. A. Circus for
October date at a
hospital in Van Nuys,
California. Jerry Cash
collection.



**Valley Presbyterian
HOSPITAL**
and the
Daily News

Present
Dates: Saturday October 17th
Sunday October 18th
Performances: 3 Per Day
Times: 12:00 - 2:00 - 4:00
Place: Valley Presbyterian Hospital

TICKETS:
\$3 FOR CHILDREN
\$5 FOR ADULTS

- Crafts
- Game booths
- Prizes
- Elephants
- Camel Ride
- Food
- Music

Tickets on sale at:
Valley Presbyterian
HOSPITAL
GIFT SHOP
15107 Vanowen Street
Van Nuys, Ca. 91405
818-902-3986

THE LA CIRCUS

because they generally offered better working and living conditions.

There was the annual mad scramble for dates as local temples shortened their runs and continued to beat on producers to lower their prices. The usual reshuffling of bookings occurred as temples sought different producers. While new players got into the Shrine business, the game lost one of its long time stars when Grace McIntosh retired.

In sum, Shrine dates were a indispensable part of the industry. At least one showman expressed concern about the long term viability of Shrine circuses as local temples got older and older as fewer new members joined. While not a critical problem at the moment, some producers were exploring the opportunities to tie-in with the scores of arenas built in the last two decades which don't book Ringling as an alternative to Shrining it.

The Royal Hanneford Circus was an important force in world of Shrinedom with major contracts at Flint, Columbus, Detroit, and Indianapolis. In addition, it booked shows into amusement parks, and had a number of big fair dates including the Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, Massachusetts in September. It was also the circus at Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade for the fifth consecutive year. Owners Tommy and Struppi Hanneford had two and sometimes three units working simultaneously, and had engagements from January to at least late November.

At the Detroit Shrine in March the performance included the Flying Condors, John Welde's bears, David Rosaire with his dogs, the Helikons on the Russian Swing, the Mark Karoly riders, Tino Walenda on the high wire, and Brunon Blaszek with his tigers. At this biggest of all Shrine dates, Hanneford had thirteen elephants, his own three, and ten from John Cueno. David Maas was ringmaster and Kay Parker led the band. The spec was a tribute to the American circus.

At the Columbus Shrine, which ran concurrently with Detroit, the following talent was on the bill: Joe and Betty Naud with their chimps, Bobby Moore's dogs, the Flying Redpaths, Los Mayas in their living statue routine, Ron and Joy Holiday with their uncaged cats, and Brian Cristiani with the elephants. The spec was a reprise of "Hello Nellie" featuring rider Nellie Hanneford. The great Senor Rai was ringmaster.

When Shogun the clouded leopard appeared in Ron and Joy Holiday's act at Green-

wood, South Carolina on February 21, she became the first of her species ever to appear in a circus ring. Hanneford was host circus for the Circus Fans Association convention in Sarasota in May. In July the show rocked audiences at the Great Circus Parade. Peruvian mime Cesar Aedo was contracted especially for the date; he soon headed for Big Apple. Wire walker Jay Cochrane was brought in to do skywalks in Huntsville, Alabama and Gulfport, Mississippi in October and November, getting great publicity on both dates. The stunt was a variation on the old time gimmick of a wire walker going up a wire attached to the top of the center pole.

Free ticket for Dick Garden's Big Circus at Reading, Pennsylvania on May 12. Al House collection.

Another big time Shrine producer was the George Carden Circus International, called Circus Vegas at some dates. It had as many as three units on tour simultaneously, one managed by George Carden, another by his father Larry Carden, and a third by Dino Medeiros. The organization played a number of other sponsored dates and some fairs including the South Florida Fair in West Palm Beach in January and early February. While it had a number of bookings in the Midwest and even a few in the East including one under canvas at a Pennsylvania country club in July, much of its hurrahing was west of the Mississippi River and in Canada.


When the Larry Carden unit played Denver for the Shrine in early May the in-ring talent included the Flying Ibarra;

Rimwood Circus on lot at Englewood, Florida on November 29. Bob MacDougall photo.

**ADMIT
ONE CHILD
14 & Under**

FREE

**THE
BIG
CIRCUS**



\$4⁷⁵
VALUE
LIONS * TIGERS

**EATUNGA
*
THE LEGEND
LIVES**

ZAMPERLA
Human Cannonball
Shooting 200 Feet

**BUNGEE
DIVERS
OF CRAZY
CANYON**

**MOTORCYCLE
DAREDEVILS
IN THE
SKY!**

**THE UNITED STATES
BMX THRILL TEAM**

**the LITTLE MERMAID
LIVE
UNDERWATER SHOW**

READING
TUES • MAY 12 • 5:30 & 8:00 PM
Maple Grove Park, Mohton

Good Any Performance that Seats Are Available.
Property of THE BIG CIRCUS - No Exchanges

the Winn's motorcycle on the wire, wheel of destiny, and sway poles; Shirley Conners with a barnyard review; the Carden elephants presented by David Sneider;

Vincent Von Duke with the cats; and Bucky and Charlie Boger with Cody the buffalo. Tim Tegge was ringmaster.

When the Medeiros unit played Salem, Oregon for the Shrine in late March Paulina Winn did a slide for life, Chris Kilpatrick worked the lions and tigers, Bret Marshall and Andy Beret rode BMX bikes, Vallerie Walenda swung on the single trapeze, Rene and Clara Turico presented their dogs and bears, the Castro brothers walked the high wire, and Ramon Esqueda bossed the Carden elephants. Ree Schweizer was the singing ringmistress.

RCUS - No Exchanges

The Tarzan Zerbini Circus's two units produced a number of major Shrine exhibitions. One unit had a string of Shrine dates starting in Fort Wayne on January 30, running with some breaks until early April in Wichita. The other troupe started the season at the Florida State Fair in Tampa in February. It entered western Canada in late April and worked its way eastward, reaching the Maritime provinces by July. It then moved back west through Quebec and Ontario, eventually closing at Chilliwack, British Columbia on September 9. The Canadian trip was mostly one dayers under canvas, sponsored by the Shrine. After returning state side the show closed the year with Shrine dates in Minneapolis and Chattanooga in October.

Among the actors at the Florida State Fair were Sylvia Zerbini with her liberty horses, Eddie Schmitt with his tigers, the Carlos Bautista family on the teeterboard, Freddie Nock on the high wire, clowns Skin and Bones, and Walter Logan with three Beatty-Cole elephants.

Performers on the Canadian tour included Jim Arneberg with his dogs, Pierre Spenle with the Knie tigers and the Zerbini elephants, Shawn Ives and Danny Bodine with a globe of death, Sylvia Zerbini with liberty horses, Remo and Max Bizzarro with juggling, Freddie Nock on





A feature on the Ringling blue unit was N/Motion, a rock and roll group, shown here in Chicago shortly before their contract was terminated in November. Shee-lagh Jones photo.

the high wire, and Joseph Dominick Bauer and Lisa Zerbini in an illusion routine. Bauer was also ringmaster, and George Angers led the band.

The George Coronas Circus had a number of big Shrine dates including Chicago, St. Louis, and Forth Worth. Performers at the February 28 to March 15 Chicago run included Ron and Joy Holiday with their uncaged cats, Manuel Goncalves on the rola bola, the Carlos troupe with a perch pole act, Les Kimes with his pigs, the Bautista family on the teeterboard, Carmen Hall with her baboons, the Flying Gaonas, and Dondi the elephant presented by Phil Schacht. Ernie McLean was the announcer and Rick Percy led the fifteen piece band.

The Atlanta Shrine date ran from April 24 to May 3 in a 150 foot round top with 4 50 foot middles. This one was big business as the Shriners also brought in the Degger Carnival with about fifteen to twenty rides on the midway. At the St. Louis Shrine in June the show appeared in seven rings in Busch Stadium. Among the many thrill acts featured on this date were the Nocks with their sway poles and helicopter trapeze act.

The Jordan International Circus, owned by Johnny Jordan, started the year in February and played mainly west of the Mis-

issippi River, although in a weird routing move in April the show jumped from Marion, Ohio to Syracuse to Emporia, Kansas. The spring run lasted through July. Two weeks under canvas at a race track in Cherry Hills, New Jersey in August were poorly attended. Dates

in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Arkansas followed before the season's finale for the El Paso Shrine in late September.

While the program changed somewhat during the course of the season, at various times it included Tahar with his alligators, the Jordan globe of death, the Zoppe riders featuring Carla Emerson, the Flying Espanas, cloud swinger Billy Barton, Ronny Carson with lions and tigers, the Dancing Gauchos, and Troy Metzler with three of the Lou Ann Jacobs elephants.

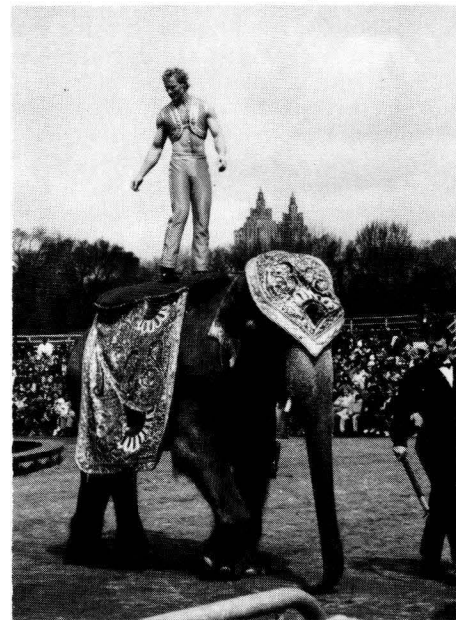
Circus Gatti opened in Texas in February and closed in California in November. Much of the summer was spent in western Canada. While the show did much of its circusing for police and fire groups owner Patti Gatti did produce at least the Los Angeles, Seattle, and San Jose Shrine dates. The spring Los Angeles engagement was cancelled at the last minute because of the riots and was rescheduled from October 29 to November 1.

Among the acts were Mike Clark with lions and tigers, Ellian Rosaire and Kazinierz Dymek who worked a comedy pony routine and a horse act, Eric Braun III with his dogs, John Pelton with the elephants, the Flying Lunas and the Flying Caceres, and Bret Marshall with his BMX bike. Clem Toca lead the three piece band, and Ari Steeples was the ringmaster. Shades of Imre Kiralfy department: the spec celebrated the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the new world.

The Toronto based Garden Bros. Circus, headed by Ian Garden, had its usual string of Canadian Shrine dates starting in Ontario on February 10 and ending there on June 14. The summer route be-

gan in Quebec in mid-July and ended in Ontario in late September.

The show dropped down to the United States in early March for Shrine dates in Allentown and Reading, Pennsylvania. At Allentown the talent included Kay Rosaire with her cats, the Flying Alvarez who also did teeterboard, Dick Kohlreiser's dogs, Dianne and Chip Arthur with the Vargas elephants, Rebecca Smith with her cannon, and clowns Jim and Barbara Vogelgesang. Lee Maloney had an eleven piece band, and Peter Sturgis was ringmaster. The show played Toronto without wild animals as the city council voted 11 to 4 to ban exotics. Initially the ban ex-



Michael Gautier leaving the ring after a promotional appearance of Ringling-Barnum's blue unit in Central Park on March 31. Herb Clement photo.

cluded the Canadian National Exhibition, Maple Leaf Gardens, and the Sky Dome, but the exemption was later overturned.

The Hamid-Morton Circus, the oldest organization in the Shrine business, started off in early February and worked until late June. Most of its dates were in the East, although it appeared as far west as Oklahoma. At the Hartford opening for the Shrine Johnny Peers' dogs and kangaroo, the Urias globe of death, the Flying Eagles, William Voss with ten Cueno tigers, and Gary Thomas with five Hawthorn elephants were among the performers. John Kennedy Kane was ringmaster.

George Hubler's International Super Circus had a number of dates from January to November for many different sponsors. While he produced shows in the deep South, the East Coast and the Plains states, most of his dates were in the Midwest. Typical was a June 6 booking in



Holland, Michigan for the Shrine which included Davide Zoppe with his monkeys, juggler Justino Zoppe, Susan Sheryll with her dogs, Lilli Ana Kristensen with her leopards, Wendy Bell on the aerial rings, the Plunkett family on the trampoline, Christopher James Plunkett on the low wire, and the Plunkett family's elephants. Bill Browning had the band.

Circus Odyssey, sometimes called All American Circus, had a number of Shrine dates from February to May, and two in the fall. Among the temple dates were Buffalo, Rochester, Cleveland, and Wilmington, Massachusetts, the last outside Boston. At the Cleveland Shrine circus in the spring the acts included Andre Skarbecki with his lions, Susan Sheryll's Afghans, the Gueraros on the high wire, juggler Justino Zoppe, Jacki Althoff with his bears, Los Martinos on the wheel of death, the Flying Valentines and the Flying Espanas, and Davide Zoppe with his monkeys. Richard Rosio had the band, and David Locke was ringmaster. At the Wilmington Shrine date in May owner Ed Migley booked an oddity: two cage acts, Skarbecki's and Trudy Strong with a Hawthorn act.

Circus Olympia had its name changed from Olympic International Three Ring Circus after the United States Olympic Committee beefed to owner Hugo Zucchini. It had a few Shrine dates, and appeared at the South Alabama State Fair in Montgomery in October. At Nashville in March the acts included Scott Osgood, sponge plunge; Andre Skarbecki, lions; Heidi Herriott, trapeze; Wendy Bell, aerial rings; Mary Ruth Herriott, high school horse; Enrico Wallenda, high wire; John Herriott, big and little horse act; the Francaros, foot juggling; and Bill Morris, elephants. Billy Boren was ringmaster and Wanda Darlington was band leader.

The Royal Australian Circus had Shrine dates in Arizona and Kentucky in the spring, at Milwaukee's Summerfest in the summer, and at the Philadelphia Shrine in the fall. Among the actors engaged by producer Ron Kelroy for the Philadelphia

engagement were jugglers Frankie Galambos and Jose Torres, the Castro brothers on the high wire and in the globe of death, Trudy Strong with the Hawthorn cage act, and Gary Thomas with five Hawthorn elephants. Ernie McLean was ringmaster, and Kay Parker led the band.

George Garden and King Royal in a micro-billing war in Northern Wisconsin in June where the shows played thirteen miles and a week apart. Tim Tegge photo.

The Great Wallenda Circus had Shrine dates in West Virginia in June, in North Carolina in September and October, and in Indianapolis in December. Acts on the North Carolina run included the Hansen family on the teeterboard; the Flying Cortes; the Wainwrights' living statues; Diane and Bob Moyer with the Bentley Bros. elephants, horses, and camels; Ted Polke with the cage act; the Garcia duo in an aerial cradle routine; Dick Kohlreiser's ponies; and producers Enrico and Debbie Wallenda on the high wire. Bill Boren was ringmaster and Wanda Darlington was the musical directress. During the summer the Wallendas appeared as a single act at Sea World of Ohio, and worked a number of other dates alone throughout the year.

Circus Hollywood, produced by Serge Coronas, had some early year work in Florida after which came some Shrine bookings including Baltimore and Salt

When the George Coronas Circus played Marietta, Georgia, outside Atlanta, from April 24 to May 3, it used this huge big top from Harold Barnes. Joe Bradbury photo.



Lake City. The season ended with a fall run of sponsored dates and fairs in the South ending at Hallandale, Florida near Miami. Acts appearing on some or all of the fall dates included Dana and D. V. Allen with the Diane Wilson seals, Lancelot Ramos with the cage act and elephant, Alan Campbell's elephants, the Wainwrights' Marble in Motion living statues, and Ada Smeiya's cage act.

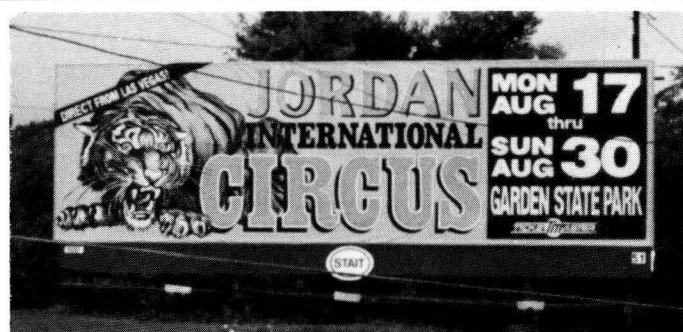
The Plunkett Circus opened with a side walled date in Texas in March before doing the Omaha Shrine in April. The year ended with a

November show in Texas which was a joint venture with Ray Valentine. Among the performers at Omaha were Susan Sheryll's dogs, Davide Zoppe's monkeys, juggler Justino Zoppe, the Carrillo brothers on the high wire, William Voss with the Hawthorn white tigers, and Christopher James Plunkett on the low wire. Bill Browning was band leader while John Herriott was ringmaster. Grace McIntosh, who had had the Omaha contract for years, was presented with a big bouquet of roses by the local Potentate before one of the performances to mark her retirement. The Plunkett family spent much of the year working for other producers including George Hubler and Ray Valentine.

Wayne McCary had his usual bevy of Shrine circuses starting with a few days in Manchester, New Hampshire, followed by about a month at various venues in Maine. The strong line up on this run included Jorge Barreda with the cage act, the Garcia duo with their aerial cradle routine, Lou Ann Jacobs with her elephants, Dolly Jacobs on Roman rings, Peter and Betty Rosendahl on unicycles, the Suarez Loyal riders with Timmi Loyal, the Flying Cortes, and the Darnells with their magic and poodle fashion show presentations. Charlie Van Buskirk was the announcer and Fred Petra was band leader.

Donnie Johnson's Clyde Bros. Circus started off at Grand Forks, North Dakota in April. In June, it made a series of satellite dates for the Kaaba Temple in Davenport, Iowa which covered twelve cities in thirteen days. Circus Valentine had June-July and September-October dates in Texas and Arkansas, and a run of school show dates in Texas around Christmas. When it played Tyler, Texas on June 25





Bill stand for the Jordan International Circus at Cherry Hills, New Jersey in August. Paul Gutheil photo.

the bill included Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the Don Johnson elephants, Bobby Steele with his bears, the Plunkett family on the trampoline, the Diane Wilson seals, the Geraldo family on the high wire, and the Flying Valentines featuring owner Ray Valentine.

Paul Kaye produced a circus in Hawaii in July and August, and one in Japan at year's end, but his contribution to circus on the continent occurred at Evansville, Indiana in late November when he produced the big Hadi Temple date, one of the highest quality Shrine productions of the year, and certainly one of the strongest for animal acts. Among the talent engaged for this one were William Voss with the Hawthorn tigers, Dana Allen with the Wilson seals, Dick Anderson's white horses, Jacki Althoff's bears, Bob Steele's bears, the Zoppe-Rosaire chimps, Les Kimes's pork chop review, the Flying Vargas, the Centrons on the aerial platform motorcycle, the Winn family on sway poles, and fourteen Hawthorn elephants. Jack Cervone was the band director and Thomas Baker was ringmaster.

Circuses were a common sight at fairs and festivals, often as free attractions booked by carnivals or by the fairs themselves. With a few exceptions these were small troupes, usually one ringer giving about an hour of entertainment. They exhibited both under canvas and in front of grandstands. While a number of indoor producers played fairs during the slow Shrine months, a few other companies specialized in this brand of show business.

The German National Circus Williams Althoff appeared at fairs in Florida and Michigan, at festivals in Delaware and Florida, and as a buy out for a Hasidic Jewish group in Brooklyn. This show was the Big Apple of its field, appearing under a first class one ring European style tent which sat about 2500. At the Kalamzoo, Michigan County Fair in August the acts included Bill Brickle with his dogs, the Galombo family with a tum-

bling routine, Margarita Michelle Ayala with a hair hang, Chip and Dianne Arthur with the Vargas elephants, and clown Johnny Meah. Owner Jeannette Williams had a CFA tent named after her at this date. She became sole owner of the show about mid-year when she bought out her cousin Jacki Althoff's interest.

Peggy and Bob Kaltenbach had their Circus Continental at a few fairs in the Midwest. At Lucasville, Ohio in August the acts included the Wilson Barnes with the Don Johnson tigers, Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the Johnson elephants, the Tony Nock family, Peggy Mills on trapeze, and Oscar and Kathy Garcia with their aerial cradle turn. Rick Legg was ringmaster. The Liebel Family Circus had its one ring tent at a number of small fairs during the year. When it played Janesville, Wisconsin in early July, the show could be seen from the Great Circus Train as it made its way to Milwaukee. The Yiengst Magic Circus, headed by Barry and Jan Yiengst, appeared at a number of fairs during the summer. Carla Walenda had her little thrill circus at fairs all over the Midwest, East and South from at least May to the year's end.

The Herriott Trained Animal Circus appeared at a fair in Palmetto, Florida in January. Owners John and Mary Ruth Herriott spent much of the year working dates for other producers and spent the summer at the Land of Little Horses park in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Happytime Circus worked a number of California fairs, concluding with one at San Juan Capistrano from November 5-15. Appearing under an 50 x 80 foot top which sat about 400, the performance included juggler Steven Michaels, ringmaster Ed Russell, and owner Dave Twomey as Happy the clown. Circus Sahara appeared at a number of fairs. Foot juggler Victoria Lee, Gary Noel with his dog and monkey acts, the DuBois duo with their aerial cradle routine, and owner Dorian Blake with his magic were among the actors.

Swan Brothers Circus worked a series of California fairs and festivals from at least April to June. Brothers Michael and Andy Swan put on the entire performance. Jorge and Lou Ann Barreda produced the circus at the Mississippi State Fair in Jackson in October. Talent included the Galambos family on teeterboard, Susan Sheryll with her dogs, Davide Zoppe with his monkeys, jug-

gler Justino Zoppe, Nuria Rampin with a cloud swing, and the Lou Ann Jacobs elephants. Agent Dwight Damon's Star Spangled Circus '92 was a feature of a Deerfield, New Hampshire fair with the Nocks twin sway poles, the Antasha duo on the wheel of destiny, and Christina LaDeon with the ever popular poodle fashion show. Wes Oler produced the circus at a fair in Ballston Spa, New York in late July which included Pat Davison on the rola bola, Flash Austin on the trampoline, Jim Clements with Moxie the elephant, and the Flying Valentines.

Petting zoos, in many ways the descendants of the Zoological Institute of the 1830s, were also popular features at fairs. They offered a combination of exotic and domesticated animals, from goats and sheep to elephants and camels. Among those on tour were Dave Hale's which appeared at the Great Circus Parade, the Bob Jones Petting Zoo, and Joe Frisco's Menagerie. The Commerford Pet Expo was the biggest name in petting zoos with three units. It played in the East early in the year, and made numerous fairs later on including the big Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, Massachusetts in September. This organization owned about 500 animals including Dickie the giraffe, formerly of Ringling Bros.

Circus Gatti ad for the Los Angeles Shrine. Date was cancelled because of riots resulting from the Rodney King verdict. Warren Wood collection.

CIRCUS GATTI '92

At The **SHRINE AUD.**
and **MIDWAY CARNIVAL**



9 GREAT PERFORMANCES
THUR., FRI., SAT., SUN. APR. 30 thru MAY 3
Thur. 2 & 8 pm - Fri. 2 & 8 pm - Sat. 10:30 am, 2:30 & 7 pm - Sun. 11 am & 3 pm
SHRINE AUD.

Other circus-related activities on fair grounds included the Rix family bear show, and numerous freak animal pit shows. A number of performers worked as single acts on midways. While most were aerial or thrill acts, Trudy Strong with the Hawthorn tigers was engaged as a single attraction by a few fairs. A handful of showmen, such as Ward Hall and Chris Christ, had sideshows at fairs. Bobby Reynolds had one on the board walk at Brooklyn's venerable Coney Island during the summer until a local politician beefed about a pickled punk display which was part of the exhibit. The Jim Rose Circus Sideshow's American tour began in New Orleans in early November after finishing up in Canada. While some of the acts were traditional side show turns, others were bizarre, even gross.

A flock of small, mostly one ring, shows performed indoors, almost always functioning as fund raising vehicles for charities such as PTAs and veteran's groups which were unable to contract with larger circuses. These shows frequently sold their tickets via the telephone. Called "school shows" because of their propensity to perform in school auditoriums and gyms, these aggregations usually trekked during the school year, and generally played smaller communities, often the towns that saw the tiny wagon circuses of a hundred years ago.

Big John Strong, the Barnum of school showmen, died on January 6, but his widow Gudrun carried on his company. Working under titles such as Wonderful World of Magic or Santa's Christmas Show the Strong organization had a number of mini-routes throughout the year such as a week in Texas in January, a western run from early February to late April, a Midwestern string in June, and another in the Midwest at Christmas. Among performers who worked for

Hamid-Morton Circus set up at the Westchester County's Yonkers Race Way in New York. Paul Gutheil photo.



Strong at various times during the year were juggler T. J. Howell, knockabout comedians Bob and Bill Dunderdale, foot juggler Frank Clark, and magician Floyd Bradbury. The Famous Cole Circus, Ron Bacon's gift to the genre, had both a spring and fall route around the Ohio River Valley.

In the spring the roster included clowns Skin and Bones with pot bellied pigs and a dog, the Ricola brothers with knockabout comedy, and ringmaster Dick Johnson who also performed magic. June Johnson, Dick's wife, was show manager. Joining the Johnsons on the fall dates were Oscar and Kathy Garcia who juggled and did their cradle act, foot juggler Vickie Howle, and Mike Rice with Odessa the mule.

The Cole All Star Circus had early year and fall tours of upstate New York. When the show played Victor, New York on January 26 the acts included magician Phil Chandler, clown Mike Snider, whip expert Bobby Fairchild, and trapezist Angela Null. Owner Billy Martin did his gorilla parody. Jose Cole had a series of dates in the upper Midwest in at least March. A giant among school shows, this one used two rings and featured clown Armando Vazquez, dog trainers Carl and Patti Reed, jugglers and unicyclists Janna and Jeff Bruski, hula hoopist Marine Castro, and elephant trainer Tom Demry. Ringmaster Gary Holveck also performed magic, the norm on this type presentation.

The Royal Palace Circus, known on some dates as Circus Galaxy, started the year in West Virginia in March. It was in Ohio in June, New York in July, Indiana in October, and presumably other places at other times.

Among the actors were Harry Dubsky who did a one finger stand, the Bruski who juggled and unicycled, and Stephanie Chapman who worked three uncaged leopards. Owner Harry Dubsky Sr. was ringmaster, often using the *nom de ring* of Harry Van Zell. Tommy Lunsford's American Showtime



Liebel Family Circus at the South Boston, Virginia fair. E. E. Cash photo.

Circus was in Florida (and one would think elsewhere) in the spring. This one moved on a dozen trucks, a large number by school show standards. Stu Miller was show manager and did magic, the Great Demille walked a low wire, and Jim Clements presented Moxie the elephant.

Mike Naughton had the Yankee Doodle Circus out in New York state in March with Los Alacorns in a musical clown routine, the Darnell sisters with illusions and the ever popular poodle fashion show, and the Bertini family with unicycles, pigeons, juggling, and a Ninja number that included some big snakes. This one carried a small petting zoo which included what was purported to be the world's tiniest horse. Ray McMahon's Royal American Circus had dates in the South and the Plains states on and off from February to November. Among the acts working this one at various times were Dana Allen and the Diane Wilson seals, Roberto and Jose Torres with their juggling and high wire routines, and hand balancer Harry Dubsky Jr.

Circus Fantasy appeared in West Virginia in October and November. Among the actors were clown Doyle Wright, fire eater Dave Dickerson, slack wire walker Marion Zerbini, chair balancer Gary Sladdeck, and dog trainer Irma Francis. Owner Byron Bowman performed magic. Bill Brickle's Wonderland Circus hurried in South Carolina for most of January. Circus Pages was in the South and Midwest in April, mostly in National Guard Armories, and in British Columbia in May.

The Reynolds Showcase Theatre, A Magical Indoor Circus had early April to mid-May and October-November tours in Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, and Iowa. Acts included Midde Streeter with comedy music and juggling routines, Gary Noel with plate spinning and a dog act, and magician Travis Greene. Owner Bill Reynolds was ringmaster. This one day and dated Carson and Barnes in Farming-

ton, Missouri in late October. While Carson and Barnes appeared on the school grounds, the Reynolds show appeared in the school gym. The non-profit Make A Circus appeared in parks, recreation centers and auditoriums in the San Francisco area during the summer. A branch of the local parks department, the show attempted to bring circus skills to inter city kids.

Super Circus, produced by Marc Verreault and Sylvie Gladve, traveled in Quebec in May and June. The roster included Mario Zerbin on the low wire, Marie France with her dogs, Bobby Steele with his bears, Pam Rosaire and Roger Zoppe and their chimps, Bucky Steele with his elephants, and Jack Cook with his comedy car. Pierre Jean was the singing ringmaster. Al Stencell, another well known Canadian showman, took the year off.

Alberto and Sandra Zoppe's Circus Europa had dates from Houston to Hagerstown from January to September, almost always sponsored by performing arts groups. A big date was at Long Island's Staller Center in March. Another was at the Paper Mill Playhouse, the state theater of New Jersey, in mid-July where Giovanni Zoppe on the low wire, Jackie Marsolais on the single trapeze, the Colombos on the teeterboard, Roger Zoppe and Pam Rosaire with their chimps, the Wainwrights' living statues, the Bertini family on unicycles, and Tino Wallenda-Zoppe on the high wire were among the actors. Incorporating elements from Broadway and Las Vegas, the themed performance told the history of the Zoppe family back to 1842. As the always lucid Herb Clement noted, this one "had the smell of art."

The Pickle Family Circus had an engagement in Cincinnati in April, then headed back West to its home turf in San Francisco for a May date. The fall run began in October with the route including Alberta, Montana, and of course California. The annual Christmas stand in San Francisco started on December 12. The fall show, called "Tossing and Turn-

A great feature of the Milwaukee circus parade was the rebuilt United States bandwagon. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.

ing," was the story of Raz the clown and his night of restless sleep. Eleven performers and five musicians appeared in the production. The May San Francisco engagement was a benefit to help the show offset a \$250,000 deficit; a local radio personality was the ringmaster. Gary Lashinsky's Royal Lipizzaner Stallion Show had a touring unit and another at the Excalibur Casino in Las Vegas. Tragedy struck the traveling show when three horses died during an October performance in Macomb, Illinois after apparently eating poison berries.

Free pass for Byron Bowman's Circus Fantasy school show at Huntington, West Virginia on October 23. J. Scott Pyles collection.

It was a big year for Chinese circuses as four of them toured the continent, in many cases playing college campuses. The Peking Circus appeared at Bally's Casino in Reno from July 7 to July 25, and then when on the road, playing across the continent from Massachusetts to California and from Texas to Ontario. The dozen acts presented traditional Chinese fare such as hoop diving, juggling, trick bike riding, and plate spinning. The tour was produced by John Regena of Majestic International Tours. Another troupe, the Peking Acrobats, was out early in the year in Ohio and elsewhere. This one was booked by Don Hughes of IAI Productions which had brought over a small Russian circus a few years ago. In the fall Hughes had another show, this one called the Chinese Magic Revue of Taiwan, in at least the Midwest. The Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats and Magicians of Taipei were in the Midwest early in the year; one of their dates was on the Notre Dame University campus. Missing from the American circus scene for the first time in many years was any type of Russian circus as the scheduled appearance of the Moscow Circus in Chicago in January was cancelled.

If a circus falls in the woods and no one hears it department: A number of shows which for which documentation

existed in 1991, received no ink in 1992. This meant, of course, that they either trouped in obscurity or they didn't march at all. Among the missing in action were the Circle City Circus, Paul Lee's Magic Show, Gary Strong's school show, and George Garden's Sparling Bros. Circus. Jim Nordmark did not take out a show in 1992. Chuck Burnes's Periwinkle Circus had no known dates, but did book a number of acts in a store in Santa Barbara in August. Didn't get past the letterhead stage department: Robbins Bros. Circus which advertised for personnel in *Circus Report* in March.

Circuses were popular entertainments at amusement and theme parks. The performance at Baraboo's Circus World Museum included Lee and Judy Stevens with their baboons, the hand balancing Gueorguievs, the Carrillo brothers on the high wire, juggler T. J. Howell, clowns Jim Williams, and Bill Machtel, Kathy Hayes with a dressage horse, and the Cristiani elephants. David SaLoutos was ringmaster and Rick Percy was band leader. The Great Circus Parade in Milwaukee was its usual huge success as the rebuilt United States bandwagon paraded for the first time in decades. A display celebrating the history of the American circus appeared at Milwaukee, the

California State Fair in Sacramento, and the Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, Massachusetts. Significant acquisitions during the year included a cannon from Hugo Zacchini, and the loan of a band organ from Royal American Carnival.

New York's Catskill Game Park was the summer home for Ben and Darlene William with the Woodcock elephants, John Welde with his bears, and Johnny Peers with his dogs. Tampa's Busch Gardens featured Roman ring artist Dolly Jacobs, comedy high diver Don Otto, unicyclists Peter and Betty Rosendahl in December. The Busch Gardens near Williamsburg, Virginia also had circus acts including Los Gauchos. Glenn Falls, New York's Great Escape Park had rider Timmi Loyal, the Flying Eagles, Phil Schacht with Dondi the elephant during the summer.

George and Vicki Hanneford produced the circus at Fort Lauderdale's Thunderbird Swap Shop, a flea market. In September Fabianna Bizarro broke her tail

FREE PASS
ADMIT ONE CHILD

12 years old and under. This Free Pass will be honored provided seats are available. This Free Pass can not be sold or given away at location of circus on day of performance.

BYRON BOWMAN'S

CIRCUS

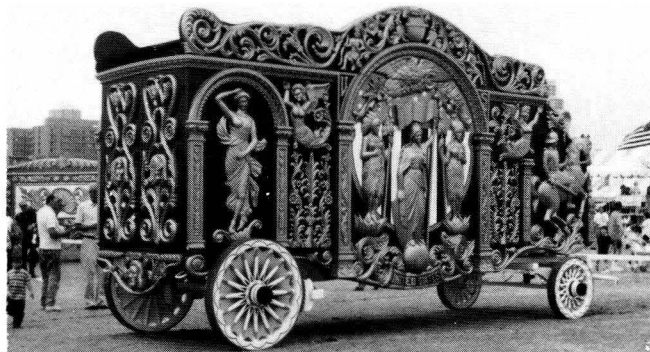
FANTASY

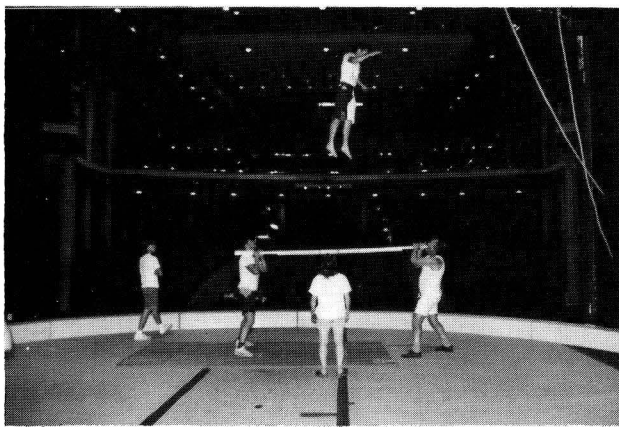


ACROBATS
MAGIC
CLOWNS
JUGGLERS
EUROPEAN
STYLE
VARIETY
CIRCUS

Adult & Student tickets on sale at door.
Adults \$6.00 Student \$4.00

VETERANS MEMORIAL
FIELD HOUSE
Huntington, WV
FRI. OCT. 23, 1992
7:00 PM
Sponsored By
Camp Fire Boys & Girls





The Galambos family practicing at the Paper Mill Playhouse in Milburn, New Jersey in July during an engagement with Alberto Zoppe's Circus Europa. Paul Guthril.

bone, dislocated her shoulder and broke a bone in her hand she she fell during her trapeze act. A bit to the north, Parc Safari in Hemmingford, Quebec provided paychecks to a number of showfolks including Gee Gee Engesser and clown Dusty Sadler. Allentown, Pennsylvania's venerable Dorney Park brought in Fay Alexander with his comedy car, comedy sword swallower Johnny Meah, high wire walker Delilah Wallenda, and Phil Schacht with Dondi the elephant for a June 20-July 5 promotion.

Libertyland Park in Memphis had the Esquedas doing their teeterboard and juggling acts in July, and Carmen Hall with her baboons in August. Harry Thomas and his comedy cage act worked three times a day at the Long Island Game Farm in Manorville, New York. Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the Donnie Johnson elephants filled in for a couple of weeks at Texas Safari Park in Clifton, Texas.

The spot date, the creating of a circus for a very short time, often only for one location for one or two performances, was an under-reported segment of the business. Without doubt, in some cases these shows were bookings by well known producers using a different title or whose connection was not explicit. While these ventures were an not a significant part of the industry, they exemplified the remarkably fluid nature of the business. These troupes were literally here today and gone tomorrow.

Examples of spot dates abounded. Ron Morris had the Olde Tyme Family Circus at Londonderry, New Hampshire in August with Diane, John and Shane Hansen with their juggling, teeterboard and skating routines. Leigh Ketchum was ringmaster. Bob Snowden put together a circus under a rented Harold Barnes tent for

a Miami Cadillac dealer in late March or early April. The American International Circus was in Rochester, New York from August 12 to 15 with foot juggler Randa Carey, rola bolaist Danny Carey, and clown Jamison Starks. Dick McCarthy was the producer of this one. The Peanut Circus was in Greenville, Texas on January 16-17. Jim Davis's Big Top Circus was in North Baltimore, Ohio on June 13 for the Lions and

Boy Scouts. Appearing under the tent were Wayne and Jennifer Haines on the unsupported ladder and on the tight wire, and juggler Jay Gilligan. Santa's Christmas Circus was in the Midwest in December with magician Gary Holveck, the Carrolls on rolling globes and juggling, and the hand balancing Waltens. This one was almost certainly a booking by a well known producer.

A special circus in June for employees of the Betty Crocker Company in Minneapolis provided employment for Sammy Gilberto on the rola bola, comedy diver Jeff Austin, and Marcella Weber on the tight wire. Kathy Rogers was the ringmistress and Don Johnson provided the ring curbs, lighting and crew. Something called America's All Star Circus was in Panama City, Florida in late February, and possibly at some neighboring towns. The five person show had Gary Noel with his dogs and monkeys, and Jim and Ricki Bovay with their hand balancing turn. Arthur Duchek, aka King Arthur of high wire fame, produced the Meadowlands Circus under canvas in New Jersey from June 18 to July 5.

Chicago's Medinah Temple presented a Children's Circus on September 13 with the foot juggling Francarros, Kurt Austin on the trampoline, fire eater and magician Steve August, and Baby Laura the elephant. Mike Anthony was ringmaster.

The Fern Street Circus was in Los Angeles in late September. This side walled troupe included the Canestrelli brothers, and was directed by John Highkin. The Democratic Free Circus appeared at Pikeville, Kentucky on October 17.

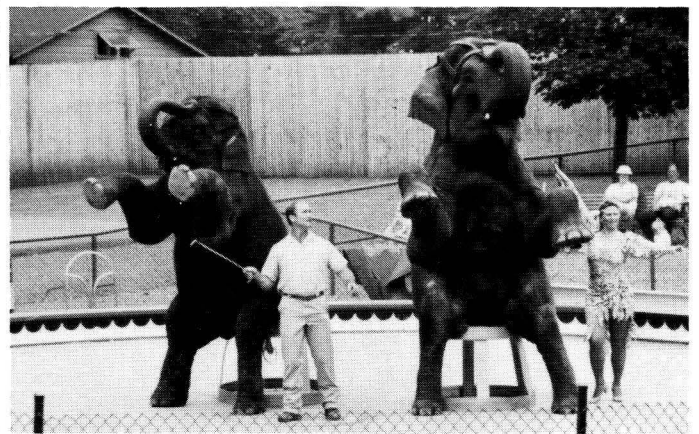
Bill Birchfield produced a Christmas circus in Kissimmee, Florida and pre-

sumably other towns in December. The Flying Lunas, Carl and Patti Reed with their dogs and horses, Joe and Betty Naud with their chimps, and the acrobatic Schreiber family worked this date. Something called the Gibson Amusement Co. Circus, produced by Gentry Gibson, supposedly played the Midwest in May. Among the actors were Shorty Shearer who did his western routine. Frank Curry had his Ronald McDonald Circus at Nashville from January 31 to February 2 for the first time since 1986. This was a first class production with Kay Rosaire with her lions and tigers, the Hawthorn elephants, the Nerveless Nocks on the sway pole, Rex Horton with his wonder bears, Droguett's poodles, the Flying Gao-nas, and the Great Wallendas on the high wire. This one also played Bowling Green, Kentucky.

The youth circus flourished, providing fun and entry level opportunities to children and adolescences. The Wenatchee Youth Circus rumbled through Washington on and off from June through September. Headed by Paul Pugh, a retired middle school principal in Wenatchee, Washington, its performers, aged three to nineteen, appeared mostly on baseball and football fields. The show was heavy on aerial acts, and was backed by a twelve piece band.

Circus Smirkus in Greensboro, Vermont was a circus camp headed by Rob Mermin which made a July and August tour through New England under a 70 foot round top. The turns in the two hour show incorporated trapeze, acrobatics, tight wire, hand balancing and juggling. Moving on four trucks and two vans, the roster included members of the Great All American Youth Circus from Redlands, California, a YMCA venture, and also some children from Russia. Bruce Pfef-

Ben and Darlene Woodcock work the Woodcock elephants at New York's Catskill Game Park during the summer. Barbara Woodcock photo.



fer's Circus of the Kids also taught circus skills to children at an upstate New York camp in the summer, and at resorts and on cruise ships in Florida in the winter.

Circus Kingdom's summer tour started in Pennsylvania in late May and ended in Ohio in mid-August, playing the East and upper South in between. Headed by David and Trudy Harris, the show was affiliated with a Pittsburgh church. Travelling about 8000 miles with all engagements indoors, the show worked a Shrine date for the first time, and also had animals at some stands, another first. The twenty-four member ensemble was from twenty colleges and universities; students received three credit for their trouping. Starting December 27, the show made a 10 city Florida run which lasted into 1993. This show was something of a feeder system for larger circuses as many of their alumni went on to join other shows.

Based in Westbury, New York, the non-profit National Circus Project taught children circus skills. This one also presented a play which incorporated circus acts at some dates. The Florida State University Flying High Circus celebrated its 45th anniversary with a half dozen performances in Tallahassee in April under a new three ring tent. Featuring 22 acts and 107 student-performers the show was at Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Georgia from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Sarasota's Sailor Circus appeared in March and April. Long time Sailor Circus head Bill Lee was honored with the commission of an original musical score called *Bill Lee's Triumphant* written by Bill Pruyn.

The performing personnel of Circus Kingdom. Founder L. David Harris is on far right. Circus Kingdom photo.



Among those inducted into Sarasota's Ring of Fame was the Hanneford family. Left to right: Tommy Hanneford, sister Gracie Hanneford, niece Nellie Hanneford, and cousin Ernestine Clarke Baer. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.

Peru, Indiana's Circus City Circus had its 33rd season. The performers, aged seven to twenty-one, were trained by Bill Anderson and others to do aerial ballet, swinging ladders, juggling, rola bola, trampoline, teeterboard, and flying trapeze. This one appeared in its home town in July and later at a festival in nearby Plymouth. The High Flying Family Circus appeared in Bloomington, Illinois on July

16-19. The Gamma Phi Circus appeared in neighboring Normal, Illinois on April 17-18.

A number of benefit performances were conducted by generous show-folk during the year. Held under Allan Hill's big top, the Sarasota Festival Circus in early January included the Nerveless Nocks with their wheel and helicopter acts, the Flying Caceres, and the Centron motorcycle act. The Showfolks Circus, also in sunny Sarasota, hurrahed on December 12 with Tony Bartok as ringmaster and Chip Arthur with the Vargas elephants. The Gibsonton Showmen's Circus, which raised money for local charities, was held on January 11 on the club house grounds using Hill's tent. Talent donating their time included Lance Ramos with his cats, magician Brian LaPalme, and Ben Williams with the Woodcock elephants. John Herriott was ringmaster and Charles Schlarbaum was musical director.

Many circus performers had pay-days at sport shows, ice shows, trade shows, corporate events, cruise ships, and even on Broadway. Showrooms in Nevada and New Jersey casinos provided a large number of jobs, so many in fact that Las Vegas became a major circus center. The Circus Circus Casinos employed, among others, Gerard Soules with his poodles, unicyclist Yvonne Savage, the Flying Caballeros, the foot juggling Ashton family, hand balancer Yuri Krasnov, the Flying Aztecs, and trapezist Lubov Piasrenkova. The Flying Vazquez worked at the Reno branch of Circus Circus from August onward after finishing with Big Apple. Among other show people earning a living in Las Vegas was Gaylord Maynard with his comedy horse act at the Excalibur Casino.

Among the performers at the Monte Carlo Festival were the Ayak Brothers, formerly on Ringling and Vargas. A circus festival in Verona, Italy in January included Eric Braun with his dogs, juggler Wally Eastwood, and the Flying Caballeros among the competitors. Gina Lolabrigida presented the awards. The fourth annual Felix Alder Days was held in Clinton, Iowa in June. The 17th annual Circus of the Stars continued its long tradition of demeaning circus arts by creating the illusion that movie and television stars could become competent performers after a few weeks practice. Among the sawdust talent on the show was cat trainer Chris Kilpatrick. Clownfest '92 was held in Seaside Heights, New Jersey in September.

Peru's Circus Hall of Fame inducted show owners John Strong and James M.





Royal Hanneford big top and trucks at Milwaukee circus parade grounds. Fred Pfening, Jr. photo.

Cole, dog trainer Victor Julian, and all-around performer Felix Morales. Delavan, Wisconsin's Clown Hall of Fame took in Paul Jung, Paul Albert aka Prince Paul, Gene Lee aka Cousin Otto, Arthur Pedler and Grock. Honorees at Sarasota's Ring of Fame were the Ringling brothers, P. T. Barnum, Felix Alder, and the Hanneford family.

David Shiner and Bill Irwin, ex-Soleil and Pickle Family clowns, rocked New York in July with a remarkable clown-review. A reunion of Ringling employees took place in Sarasota during Festival week. The negative portrayal of clowns in the movie *Shakes the Clown* and on the Fox television show *In Living Color* raised the ire of the professionally indignant.

An exhibit on women in wild west shows appeared at the Western Heritage Museum in Omaha from February to April. The Hertzberg Circus Collection in San Antonio had a show on lithograph artist Emil Rothengatter. Illinois State University in Normal had an exhibit of its circus material in June and July. An auc-

Bobby Gibbs and the Don Johnson bulls worked for a number of shows including Reid Bros. and Vargas. Bobby Gibbs photo.



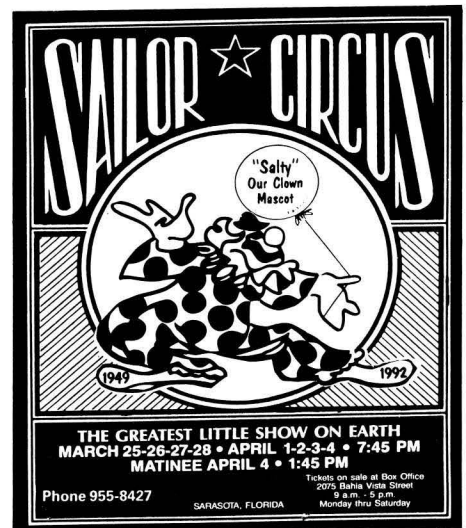
tion of circus posters in New York City in May included a Barnum and Bailey Coyne Island one sheet which went for \$16,000, an all time record for a single piece of circusiana.

The circus in literature had a great season as an uncommonly large number of books on the subject were published. Included were David Lewis Hammarstrom's biography of John Ringling North, and the third volume of Stuart Thayer's monumental history of the American circus. The long awaited fifth volume of Raymond Toole-Stott's bibliography appeared. Other volumes were Steve Gossard's history of the flying trapeze, a biography of Annie Oakley, a picture book on the Pawnee Bill show, and a legal history of the Hartford fire. A number of books on elephants came out, including one on Murray Hill and his bulls. In related fields, Siegfried and Roy published their autobiography and the definitive history of the Ferris wheel appeared.

While the death of anyone is cause for sadness, the year saw the passing of four of the industry's legendary figures: Lucio Cristiani, the greatest bare back rider ever; Lou Jacobs, master clown; John Strong and James M. Cole, both much-loved and admired showmen. Other deaths of note were Frank Ball, friend to the profession; Robert G. Behee, retired flyer; John Cloutman, showman and biographer; Chita Cristiani, rider; J. Harold Dunn, circus model builder and mega collector; Ora N. Ernst, superior triple bar performer in the Loretta twins act; Jon Friday, aerialist and ringmaster; Tiny Gallagher, aerialist; Bill Johnston, animal man and historian; Norman McLennan aka Backdoor Shorty, long time Ringling rigger; Philip McDonald, ringmaster; Frank Morrissey, old time Ringling press

agent; Lou Regan, cat trainer; David Rosenberg, owner of Triangle Poster and vendor to business; Gerard Soules, aerialist and dog trainer; Wilson Story, animal trainer and executive; and Grady Stiles, the lobster boy.

This effort completes a decade's worth of these masterpieces. This year's opus would be far less comprehensive were it not for the generosity of many show folks and show fans who made me the beneficiary of an unremitting stream of data.. This compilation's merits are in large measure the result of their thoughtfulness; its shortcomings are mine alone. I thank them all. This season's champions are: Ernest Albrecht, Jim Baker, Paul Butler, Joe Bradbury, E. E. Cash, Jerry Cash, Herb Clement, Fred Dahlinger, George Disk, Jim Dunwoody, Bill Elbirn, Carla



Newspaper ad for Sarasota's Sailor Circus. Jim Dunwoody collection.

Emerson, Franklin Felt, Ray Gronso, Paul-Gutheil, Deborah Haney, L. David Harris, John Holley, Paul Holley, Al House, Sheelagh Jones, Patsy Jordan, Blake Kellogg, Bob MacDougall, Frank Mara, Bill Millsap, David Orr, Jack Painter, Tom Parkinson, Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Lesley Pfening, J. Scott Pyles, Dan Prugh, Flora Rawls, William Rector, Bill Rhodes, Ron Sanford, Peter Sierson, Ed Smith, N. L. Smith, Mike Sporrer, Leroy Sweetland, Gigi and Tim Tegge, Frank Thompson, Debbie and Enrico Wallenda, Tom White, Bill Whitney, Bill Woodcock, and Sandy Zoppe. Special thanks to Bobby Gibbs, who once again went beyond the call of duty in providing information. My apologies if I have missed anyone. As always, *Circus Report*, edited by Don Marcks, was indispensable. *Amusement Business*, *Show-folks of Sarasota Newsletter*, *White Tops*, and various CFA top and tent publications were also useful.

Following the 1976 season Hoxie Tucker bought all of the physical equipment of the Diamond S Rodeo and hired its owner Ralph Schappacher as superintendent. The Diamond S's 100 kw generator was mounted in the Hoxie light plant semi-trailer. The rest of Schappacher's equipment was stored in winter quarters for future use.

Tucker was pleased with Michael Cecere's wild animal presentation and decided to invest in new cages and props for the act. Buck Smith was hired to build six 4 x 8 foot cages with 12" boat tires and fifth wheels. The stateroom of the wild animal semi had to be shortened to accommodate the new cages. A sleeper tractor was bought to pull the semi. Smith went on tour with the show as part of the mechanical department with his wife working in the cookhouse.

Johnny Walker, Jr. was hired as elephant boss. He had worked closely with Rex Williams with the Beatty Cole bulls. Walker brought Cory Jacobson, who had trained the elephants in 1974-1975, to quarters to help him break a new routine. Walker's wife Laura worked the six pony drill. Jacobson stayed with the show until early in the summer.

The Great American show equipment, under Bill Hill's management, was repainted as soon as it returned to quarters. This show closed earlier than the Hoxie show so this work was completed when the Hoxie show came home. This allowed the quarters staff to spend full time on the larger show.

There were staff changes on Hoxie in 1977. John Hall became booking manager and George Hodgdon became manager. Joe Eddy, who had played in the 1976 band, became band leader. Wesley Brown was property boss. John Lewis was purchasing agent and handled the front door. Circus fan Bob Brisendine joined out as 24 hour man. Warren Follin, a bullroper, joined out as Schappacher's assistant.

The gorilla, Mongo, in the air conditioned former Ringling-Barnum cage was back for a second year in the side show-menagerie. The two pole big top was used for a third year.

Fire officials throughout the country required a flame resistant big top. Consequently the 140 foot Hoxie tent was sent between seasons to Leaf in Sarasota for reconditioning. Leaf supplied the show with a certificate of flame resistance in January 1977. It verified the tent had been treated with a product

The Hoxie TUCKER STORY

Part Three

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

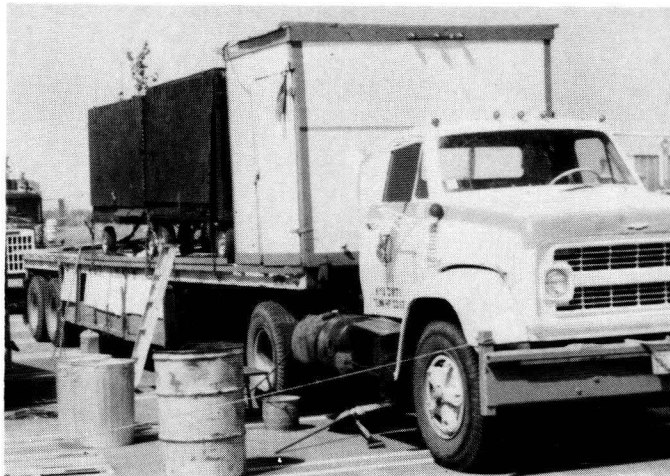
from the Excello Fabric Finishers of Coshocton, Ohio that stated that the flame retardant could not be removed by washing.

The season opened in West Palm Beach, Florida on March 19. The show moved north and entered Georgia at Albany on April 4. The next day in Douglas, a high wind blew down the side show tent. A stake was lifted by the wind and was carried over a banner line truck striking waterman Art Duval causing an injury from which he later died.

The show was in Anderson, South Carolina on April 12, then moved quickly through North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and West Virginia to Ohio for four dates.

The May 14 *Amusement Business* reported: "A straw house and three full houses greeted Hoxie Bros. Circus on its opening engagement at West Palm Beach, Florida. Auspice was the two-year-old Amara Shrine Temple in their premiere circus. Col. Edward B. Smith Jr., who arranged the date and coordinated the Shrine and the circus, said plans for the 1978 circus were solidified during the engagement.

Semi carrying the shifting cages for the Cecere wild animal act. Pfening Archives.



"The show was freshly painted in winter quarters. New, larger cat cages were built. Two trucks, one for the baby elephants, and one utility semi were added. Two new 150 kw Caterpillar generators power the show. Fifteen semis and seven straight jobs move the show and 21 campers and trailers transport staff and cast.

"A massive advance sale to underprivileged children, family ticket, program book and banners, coordinated by Ed Smith and Paul Robinson and their staff, provided big business for the side show, again featuring Mongo the Gorilla and the pit show with a twenty-five

foot python. Banner sales were so successful it was necessary to hang the sidewalls instead of the quarter poles to accommodate the banners. One banner was 74 feet in length, promoting the Dade County Youth Fair and the Deggeller Spectacular.

"Seventeen displays comprise this year's program to wit: spec, Fantasy on Parade; cage act, Michael Cecere; clown entree, Tom Sink; aerial display, Miss Graciella, single trap and Miss Laura, Miss Linda, Miss Yamily and Miss Judith on the Spanish web; Whips, Kenny Schappacher; pony drill, Laura Herriott; highwire, the Edmundos; the un-rideable burro, Kenny Schappacher; illusions, Chandler and company; elephants, presented by John and Laura Walker; clowns; Paulette's Peerless Puppies; High school horse, Laura Herriott Caudill; unicycles, Diaz Sisters; clowns; juggling; and flying trapeze, Flying Columbians. The performance was 100 minutes in length and was accompanied by a five-piece band.

"The 1977 tour will run for thirty-one weeks and will cover fourteen states and approximately 15,000 miles.

"All engagements are sponsored, and a few shopping centers, including a nine-day Chicago run, are scheduled. A handful of other two-day stands sprinkle the route. Phones are used on some engagements, but the show relies heavily on committee sales and a strong advance with two billers and a press agent ahead of the show. Radio and newspaper advertising is purchased in each market, and a 30 second TV commercial is used where possible.

"A substantial increase in the advance budget is obvious this year with large committee kits including tips and photos with stories are sent each sponsor. Additionally, press kits are sent

directly to each newspaper in the area prior to the arrival of the press agent. Heralds and flyers are provided each committee, and heavy newspaper, TV and radio giveaways are used.

"Three new additions to the Hoxie Bros. advance are Col. Ed Smith, Paul Robinson and Russ Weaver. Smith and Robinson come from executive positions with other circuses. Weaver previously has been involved with broadcasting and public relations work in New York City. Smith assumes the position of area representative for the Southeast. Robinson is engaged as marketing consultant for the show, and will be responsible for the show's multiple-day stands and larger engagements as well as trouble shooting. Weaver will make every town as media representative ten days to two weeks ahead of the show. National public relations is being coordinated by the Betsy Nolan Agency of New York City.

"Hoxie Bros. Circus 1977 staff lineup is: Hoxie and Betty Tucker, owners; John Hall, booking manager; George Hodgdon, manager; Ralph Schappacher, superintendent; Phil Chandler, ringmaster; Joe Eddy, band leader; Col. Ed Smith, Al Meredith, Jim Raab, Charles Moyer, Dr. Jim Pitts, and Ron Bacon, area representatives; Celia Guida, advertising manager; Johnny Walker Sr., concession manager; Roger Boyd Jr., side show manager; John Lewis, purchasing agent; Johnny Walker Jr., elephant superintendent; Tom Sink, producing clown; Wesley Brown, property superintendent; Dorothy Brown, wardrobe mistress; Paul Bohler, transportation superintendent; Helen Bohler, front door superintendent; Jose Diaz, electrician and Paul Wells, mechanical superintendent."

After visiting the show at two Ohio stands Lee Cavin provided a report in the July-August *White Tops*: "Subtle changes in the performance and personnel were obvious in the 1977 edition of Hoxie Bros. Circus in visits five weeks apart this year.

"It was a happy show on May 7 in Zanesville it was a payday. Personnel would have Sunday, Mothers' Day, off.

"Circus fan Edward Jones of Zanesville was acting as assistant 24-hour man and purchasing agent that day, and scurrying all over the town during Hoxie's 15 hour stay. His wife was collecting signatures at both performances opposing endangered species legislation.

"The next day personnel were guests at a picnic sponsored by the Harold Barnes CFA tent in Springfield. Then they would face the happy task of giving extra shows to handle the crowds Monday. I returned to the show in Willard, Ohio on June 15.

"By then the show had been to Chicago and was headed back east. Whip cracker Kenny Schappacher had left, but his

mother and two sisters, with five new horses for the spec, had joined in his stead. Prop boss Wesley Brown, who had been in serious condition in University Hospital, Columbus, since the Zanesville date after crushing his right hand in the spool truck mechanism, was back on the show. Both days the circus was playing on almost identical grassy lots located on school grounds.

"George Hodgdon, a Methodist minister who first sampled the circus business back in the 1950's when he joined Mills Bros. in the summers as a press agent and public relations man, is general manager this season, with John Hall, who formerly held the title, staying behind in Florida and working as booking manager.

Ralph Schappacher, whose Diamond S Rodeo will be recalled as the most spectacularly painted show on the road the past three years, is new superintendent.

"Johnny Walker, Jr., assisted by his wife Laura, oldest daughter of John and Mary Ruth Herriott, then worked the eight elephants in the ring, and can boast of having five of them in working harness on bad lots and in other emergencies.

"John Lewis, former owner of Lewis Bros. Circus, is purchasing agent, and doubles in the office and on the front door.

"Returning from last season are almost all the rest of the staff and performing personnel.

"Phil Chandler, now sporting a devilish mustache, is ringmaster and he and his wife Linda work a production magic number in the ring this season. Joe Eddy has brought last year's band back intact, and is playing many circus standards during the performances.

"Johnny Walker, Sr., was concession manager and supervises big top raising. Roger Boyd, Jr., again displayed a unique system for turning the midway crowd to his platform for an opening bally, was back as side show manager. Mongo the gorilla is still a star attraction for the show.

"Wesley Brown directs the property crew and his wife is wardrobe mistress.

"Tom Sink as producing clown is working alone in several spots. The Cortez troupe, which appears



Former Diamond S Rodeo utility truck on Hoxie Bros. in 1977. Dave Orr photo.

on both flying trapeze and high wire, has only two men from last year's troupe back with it. The sister and a teenage brother have left. The two men's wives and the eight-year daughter of one have replaced them.

"The performance opens with an elaborately costumed spec which features performers and most of the show animals.

"Michael Cecere, teenage trainer, was an effective opener this season with his six young and playful lions. He has the cats doing high jumps and mass roll-overs, steeple jumps, and hoop and barrier routines in this year's moving act.

"Tom Sink works the track next with a comic juggling routine, then there is a girl aerial ballet with Miss Graciella on single trapeze.

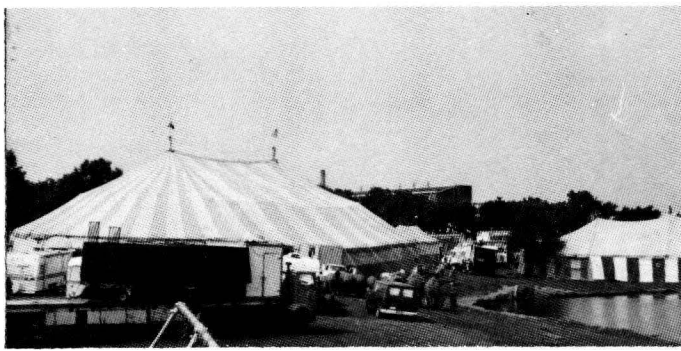
"Kenny Schappacher worked a whip and roping act with Laura Walker. Laura returned with liberty ponies.

"The Edmundo troupe (Cortez) troupe (5) offers a routine on the high wire varying from head stands and somersaults to breath taking three and four-high displays.

"Yo Yo, the un-rideable burro, provides a comedy break utilizing kids from the audience, the clowns, and a half-pint ring-er from the show for a climax.

Step van used as downtown bally in 1977. Pfening Archives.





Hoxie Bros. lot in Clifton, New Jersey on August 28, 1977. Dave Orr photo.

"Phil and Linda Chandler, backed by a group of costumed show girls, offer an illusion routine next, finishing with a sword box in which the impalee disappears, and a bit where Linda is sliced into thirds.

"John Walker, Jr., in his first season, works the eight Hoxie elephants, put through a fast routine, working first all five youngsters, and finishing with the large females.

"There's a clown break, then Diaz Sisters (4) in a unicycle routine with balance on two high cycles for a finish.

"Linda Chandler was next with a dog act. Laura Herriott Walker was scheduled next a high school routine, but she has been working her 15 year-old horse American Anthem no more than one show a day. It is lame in one leg.

"The Diaz sisters work a four-girl juggling act on the track, and the clowns work at the edge of the ring while the prop crew rigs the net for the Flying Columbians (Cortez), who do double somersaults and double passes. This act featured several creditable leaps by an eight year-old who was a crowd-pleaser.

"The two-pole round tent is in its third season but still looking good. Show people said that owner Tucker was ordering a new big top from the Leaf company that week. They were uncertain whether Hoxie would duplicate the present rigging, whose unusual design caused many production problems, which requires four different lengths of quarter poles. He may order a standard 140 foot round tent with a 50 foot middle.

"The show was moving at mid-season on 19 owned vehicles in addition to advance. Straight trucks included the Chevrolet for the canvas, an International stake; a Chevrolet pickup, a Chevrolet water truck with pump, and a van which pulls butcher sleeper.

"Semi units were: seats and poles pulled by a White tractor; mechanic's shop pulled by a Kenworth; working man's sleeper pulled by a Chevrolet;

cookhouse pulled by an International; elephant unit one pulled by a White; lead stock, International; elephant unit two, White; gorilla cage, International; menagerie cage, International; lion cages and arena, Chevrolet; and light plant, White.

"A Case high lift and a Clark industrial loader were carried piggyback on semis.

"Hoxie's traditional purple color scheme is still there but is modified on many vehicles this year. White with purple trim and scrolling seems to be the trend.

"With so many acts requiring heavy props—lion arena, high wire rigging, hardwood floor for unicycles, and trapeze net—performing in one ring the prop crew under Wesley Brown continues to provide a performance equal to that of the stars as it moves the show with no waits.

"Lighting is again a combination of floods and banks of mercury vapor units hung between quarter poles. Seating is 13-high bleachers completely surrounding the ring, with no reserves. Aluminum stringers and the spotting of material in bundles at the erection site by a high lift let these bleachers go up as rapidly as seat wagons.

"A new band platform is placed at the end of the prop truck between the performer entrance and exit puts the musicians further into the tent and visible to the audience."

On May 15 Hoxie was in Robinson, Illinois. Two day stands were played at shopping centers in Crystal Lake, Hoffman Estates, Napperville and Downers Grove, Illinois. Another two day stand came at Indianapolis on June 3 and 4.

The show went back through Ohio and West Virginia to Pennsylvania. The money getting New Jersey stands, booked by Al Meredith, started at Boonton on July 23.

The show reported truck problems in August when a pickup truck loaded with recently bought steel for stakes was lost for five weeks. It was finally located on a supermarket parking lot, with the load intact. Another pickup truck carrying the elephant ride ramp and saddle was missing after passing through the Bronx

prior to the Bayonne date.

Gordon Carver visited the show in Ocean City, New Jersey on August 17 and made this list of the rolling stock:

1. Semi. Elephants.
2. Semi. Gorilla cage.
3. Semi. Cages, side show poles and canvas.
4. Semi. Lead stock, side show banners painted on one side.
5. Semi. Elephants, side show banners painted on one side.
6. Semi. Light plant.
7. Semi. Big top center and side poles, planks and stringers.
8. Semi. Big top quarters poles, stringers and jacks.
9. Semi. Cookhouse.
10. Straight truck. Water wagon.
11. Semi. Flat bed carried six lion cages, steel arena and props.
12. Straight truck. Mechanical.
13. Semi. Working men sleeper.
14. Straight truck. Mechanical, tires.
15. Straight truck. Stake driver. Pulled two wheel trailer carrying forklift.
16. Trailer. Sleeper.
17. Pickup truck. Sound unit for downtown bally.
18. Semi. Office-ticket wagon.
19. Semi. Midway snake show and concessions.
20. Straight bed, big top canvas spool.

The side show top was a 60 with three 30s. The side show menagerie contained three large elephants and five babies, one of which was an African; one lion; one tiger; two baboons; one orgagatang; one yak; two camels; one llama; three borros; six ponies; and Mongo the gorilla. There was no dining top. A 15 by 25 foot canvas cover was stretched from the cookhouse semi.

The show suffered a blow down at Sussex, New Jersey on September 2. The big top was totaled and a section of the side side top was lost. The flying act rigging

Section of Diamond S Rodeo canopy used by Hoxie Bros. Circus in River Vale, New Jersey on September 17, 1977. Dave Orr photo.





Leonard and Betty Tucker, owners of Hoxie Bros. and Great American Circuses. Charles DeWein photo.

was mangled. There were no injuries. No stakes were pulled from the ground, but a few guy lines were broken. The side ropes actually slipped off the stakes.

The next five stands were side walled while awaiting the arrival of the Diamond S Rodeo canopy. The canvas arrived in Bayonne on September 10. Two lengths of canopy were erected opposite each other. The center poles were guyed out to support the lights and rigging. A gasoline truck from the Diamond S show also joined the show. The flying act rigging was repaired and the act returned to the performance in Jersey City on September 13.

The October 1 *Amusement Business* published this report of the blow down: "A freak windstorm that came out of nowhere, according to Hoxie Bros. Circus area representative Al Meredith, took down the show's 140 foot round top and side show on the airport grounds at Sussex, New Jersey, September 2 at 4:45 p.m. Meredith said several aircraft on the airport were damaged by the 85 mph winds, one twin engine aircraft was flung into an adjacent woods, and a smaller light plane was lifted up and deposited atop a nearby tree.

"After surveying the damage, show owner Hoxie Tucker had the tent taken to an open area at a nearby town where it was determined the top was beyond repair. Tucker said the canvas had sustained countless rips and tears, and in addition, the cable was snapped and knotted. Tucker then left immediately for Florida to get the replacement tent, a single-pole top of similar size, on the road to New Jersey, only to find that it had sustained irreparable water damage in storage, whereupon he placed an immediate

order with Leaf Tent and Sail Co., of Sarasota for a replacement.

"Another show executive, Paul Robinson, also in Florida, said, 'I was in Sarasota with Hoxie two days after the order was placed and the canvas was in, side-wall was being made, and work on one quarter was under way.' Bill Winkler has pulled out all the stops to get it ready, and it will be completed in a few weeks. Robinson said the top would be a duplicate of its predecessor, a two-pole, 140 foot round top, blue and white striped. Robinson said that while the side show tent sustained some damage, the necessary repairs were made on the road, and it was back in the air in a matter of hours.

"Show superintendent Ralph Schapacher went to Florida on September 5 to pick up four sections of canopy, each 150 feet in length, to be used until the new top is ready. The canopy was among the assets of Diamond S Rodeo that have been acquired by Hoxie.

"According to Tucker, the storm left as fast as it came. 'In three minutes it was over.' The top had been blown upwards and away from the front and back yards, thus inflicting no damage. A diesel semi tractor trailer to which one main guy line had been anchored was moved twelve feet. 'The stake line held, and no ropes were broken,' said Tucker.

'In the entire storm only two stakes pulled. 'It just pulled straight up,' concluded the show owner.

"According to Meredith, the 6 p.m. show was re-set for 7 p.m., and the 8 p.m. show for 9 p.m. Only act missing was the flying act, whose rigging sustained damages but was quickly repaired locally. Meredith spoke highly of show personnel and sponsors, who worked hard to clear

The midway ape show new to Great American in 1977. Fred Pfening photo.



Bill Hill, manager of Great American in 1977. Charles DeWein photo.

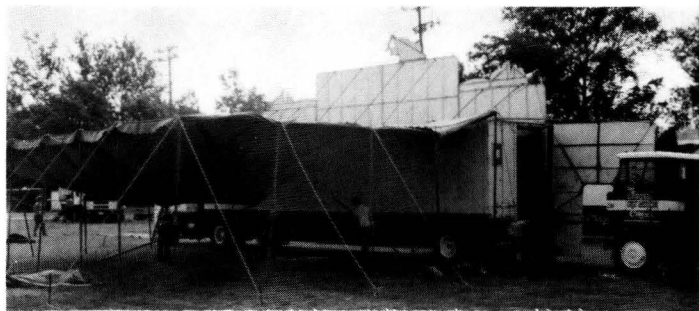
the debris and put on the performance. There were no injuries.

"The first show, side walled, was a full house, the second two-thirds crowded.

"Hoxie Bros. Circus and Hoxie's Great American Circus are both in New Jersey at this time, said Robinson. He stated that the Great American Circus tour would conclude in South Carolina in mid-October, with Hoxie Bros. closing in Florida the latter part of that month. Both shows seasons are longer than in previous years, according to Robinson, and business has been good along both routes."

The New Jersey tour finished at Pennsville on September 22. The show cut south through Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina to Georgia. A new big top arrived in Fort Stewart, Georgia on October 13. The show closed in Spring Hill, Florida on October 20.

John Van Matre visited the show in Bar



Canopy on back of ape show on Great American. Dave Orr photo.

tow, Florida the day before it closed. Hereported his visit: "Show came in here under sponsorship of the Woman's Club of Bartow, matinee at 6:15 p.m., had a half house; night show was at 8:15 p.m. Show is now carrying 7 elephants, 2 big ones and 5 babies, the two big ones do not work in the show, only the babies. One of the two big ones is used on the midway for elephant rides and does a land office business. The other big elephant that was sick and died at Fernando Beach was buried there. The truck lost in the Bronx is still missing.

"Show sported a new blue big top here made by Leaf, this was the sixth time it had been put in the air. It will be ready for next year's tour, side walls were stripes of blue and white. The new tent replaced the big top destroyed in the blow down at Sussex, New Jersey. Big top is a two poler with the combined side show and menagerie a three poler. Show left Bartow for Springhill, where it closed its season and went into winter quarters at Miami.

"Coming onto the midway you hit dead center a novelty stand. In back of this is the elephant ride, in back of this is candy floss, in back of this is popcorn. The side show was on the right hand side of the midway. Two trucks serve as a banner line for the side show. One of the features inside was Mongo, the gorilla. Price \$1, much too high and did very little business here. Probably everybody at the bally before the big show would have gone in for 50¢, but when he said \$1, the assembled crowd dispersed as fast as a rocket taking off from the Cape.

"For the size of the show and for the admission price of \$3.50, it is one of the best bargains on the road today. It is one of the cleanest and has the finest wardrobe of any show its size on the sawdust trail. Show carries a five piece live band that really cuts the show and is hard to beat by any of the other windjammer groups of any size on any other show except the big one. There are no reserve seats, first come gets the pick of seats, seats are 14 high. Programs sell for \$1 and are very attractive.

"On the left side of the left midway and across from the side show were two semi's. One contained a snake show spotted next to the marquee, and alongside of it was the ticket wagon semi. Both are parked longways.

Lot was out from town and on the left of the highway, no charge for parking. Dining department had three tables set up for the help. Most were looking forward to the close of the season and payday the next day.

"After the blow down working conditions were tougher until they got the new blue big top, but even the weather gave them a break as they only had three days of rain between the blow down and the arrival of the new big top. The famous Hoxie color of purple is fast going the way of dishwater, down the drain, each year finds a little less of it."

The Great American show moved on eleven show owned trucks that were painted red, white and blue. Bill Hill was manager. The show carried three elephants, a camel and two horses. It opened on April 2 at Cutler Ridge, Florida.

The side show was again replaced by an ape show featuring Kongo, two large chimps and an orangutan. The gorilla was displayed in a semi trailer cage from Bobbie Berosini. A large carnival style front folded out from one side of the semi. The attraction made a flashy look on the midway. A canopy top was attached to the back side to provide room for viewing the primates. Bandleader Charlie Moyer cared for the apes.

The route took the show through Florida, Georgia, South and North Carolina. In May the show moved fast through Virginia to New Jersey for a number of traditional Hoxie stands booked by Al Meredith. Twenty-seven Pennsylvania dates booked by Allan C. Hill took the show to Ohio in August. A three day stand was later played at the West Virginia state fair. Great American then went back to pick up additional Pennsylvania and New Jersey dates. The show closed on October 15 at Denmark, South Carolina.

1978

For the first time in ten years John R. Hall was no longer with the show, his only connection being the preparation of the printed program. John Lewis replaced him as manager. Joe MacMahon joined as general agent. He brought J. C. Rosenheim and Dick Georgia over from the Beatty-Cole show as contracting agents.

This was the first time anyone had officially been listed in that position. George Buttery was superintendent. Thurman Knight was advance advertising manager and Paul Robinson handled press. Jim Royal was ringmaster. Helen Wilson was band leader.

New big show acts included Billy Gunga and wife, balancing and rolling globe; the Volvos, revolving ladder; the Wazzan troupe, acrobatics and trampoline; Prof. Miller; a chimp act; and the Flying Vienas, an all girl flying trapeze act. Jim Royal presented a magic number. Mike Cerece was back with the wild animal act. Johnny Walker, Jr. again handled the elephants. The Berosini midway gorilla show was moved to Hoxie from Great American.

In January MacMahon sent an extensive memo to the area contracting agents which provides an insight into the booking of both Hoxie and Great American. Various parts are quoted here.

The opening paragraph said: "After going over the operation of the advance of both Hoxie and Great American, I feel that in order for me to operate and consolidate the advance as Mr. Tucker desires, we must set up a set of rules to be followed and to be enacted at once. Only with your full cooperation can we co-ordinate all parts of the advance, booking, press and brigade."

All contracting agents were to call in once a week and report the status of dates assigned. Until March 7, the calls were to be made to the winter quarters. After the show was on the road an answering service was used. The agents were to ask for "Hagen." If they wanted to talk to MacMahon personally they were to ask for "Jack Hagen."

John Lewis manager of Hoxie Bros. Circus in 1978. Charles DeWein photo.



The number of phones needed for the boiler room was listed. Three phones in towns of 5,000 to 20,000; four phones for 20,000 to 50,000; seven phones for 50,000 to 100,000 and ten phones for populations above 1,000,000. The sponsors were to pay the phone bill.

MacMahon asked each agent for a list of towns being worked and the tentative exhibition date. Each was to report every ten days. Contracts on dates assigned were to be signed and in the circus office at least six weeks before the exhibition date. A schedule of dates assigned was listed. Jim Raab, for example, had Hoxie from July 1 to July 26 and Great American from April 8 to April 20 and May 13 to August 15. Ron Bacon had Hoxie from May 1 to May 19, May 29 to June 28 and Great American from August 8 to September 17.

MacMahon stated: "While I realize the show has been successful in numerous towns without telephone soliciting, the cost of operating the circuses increases yearly and it seems to be a trend that the advance sales by the same sponsor decreases yearly. By the same token the box office declines. I feel we must make a gradual change to phones or a guarantee from the sponsor for their advance sale. Repeat sponsors that are on your route that were played without phones in 1977 will be approved.

"Any new towns, with new sponsors must be signed as follows: (a) with telephone soliciting prior to membership sale; (b) or if sponsor does not want

Billy Gunga balancing act on Hoxie in 1978. Charles DeWein photo.



phones, sponsor must guarantee that the circus share of their membership or advance sale shall net the circus \$750 for Hoxie Bros., meaning the sponsor must sell \$1,500 to make 50 percent or \$750 for themselves. For Great American the sponsor must guarantee that advance sale will net the circus \$500. The sponsor will receive 10 percent of the gate."

The agents were not to assign phone promoters in any town. All assignments were to be handled by MacMahon. In towns sold out to promoters a lease agreement for each town was to be received by February 1. The sell out price for Hoxie was \$4,000 per day and \$2,500 per day for Great American, plus booking fee, tickets, advertising and date order. The circus was to retain all midway income. The buy out price to sponsors was the same, plus lot, licenses, dumpsters, local media advertising and tickets. The show would furnish outdoor advertising. A deposit of \$750 for Hoxie and \$500 for Great American was required in advance.

The division of advance sale money varied from state to state. In Florida the circus received 55% and the promoter 25%. In Tennessee and Maryland the show took 65% and the promoters 15%. A special contract was made with Allan Meredith for New Jersey dates which was not detailed in the memo.

It is not known how the new rules went over with the area contracting agents. Most of them had booked the show for years and no doubt had less formal arrangements.

A two week early year tour was played for Ron Morris in the Tampa area. The five elephant act, Cecere's lions and the Great American big top were used.

The show opened the regular season with a three day stand in West Palm Beach, Florida from March 30 to April 2. The side show was missing, replaced by two pit shows, an Egyptian mummy and a snake show. Other than the big top the only tent on the lot was 20 by 30 foot dining top. The big show band consisted of a husband and wife playing drums and an electric organ.

The usual route north was played and by the middle of May the show was in Indiana, Illinois and Ohio. MacMahon booked a number of former Beatty-Cole sponsors, since that show had started using a number of shopping mall stands. The Pennsylvania territory began in July, followed by New Jersey. By then



Stu Miller making side show opening in 1978. Charles DeWein photo.

Joe MacMahon had assumed the role of manager.

King Bros. circus closed early in 1977. Whitey Black, King manager, and some other King people joined the Hoxie show in the concession department. When the former King employees joined Johnny Walker, Jr. and some concession people left. James "Dutch" Crawford replaced Walker as elephant boss.

The lengthened route took the show back to Northern Florida and into Alabama. The Hoxie show then played stands in Louisiana and Mississippi. This was the first time the show had been in those states. Several days were played in New Orleans. The show closed in Coral Gables, Florida on November 12, making it the longest season on record.

An extensive article about the Hoxie show appeared on the front page of the November 8, 1978 *Wall Street Journal*. Journal. Reporter John Moore had visited the show for five days in New Jersey and Maryland.

The article in part read: "Normandy Beach, New Jersey. Rain pelts the big blue tent of Hoxie Bros. circus. But the customers stay in their seats, the jugglers and the clowns carry on, and Lee Maloney, the organist, keeps rolling out such tunes as 'Circus on Parade' and 'Exodus.'"

"Water leaking through the top of the tent soon makes the trapeze bars too slippery for the Flying Viennas to perform. A small lake collects in the center ring; the lion and pony acts are canceled. The remaining performers relocate to a dry section of the big top—fortunately pitched on a slight slope and the show goes on.

"Between shows, a forklift truck moving a heavy prop gets stuck in the mire. An elephant is led in to finish the task. The beast, barging through a deep puddle by the bandstand, splashes water on the organ, causing the \$3,000 electronic amplifier to short-circuit.

"Eight days and eight towns later, the storm, which came in the wake of Hurricane Debra, is a distant memory for

most troupers, but Mr. Maloney still hasn't found a technician or service person to fix the 200-watt amplifier. Then he locates a shop in Wilmington, Delaware. But its Friday, and, he notes, "They couldn't even start until Monday. By then we'll be in Washington, D. C."

"People who flinch from crises shouldn't run away and join the circus—especially a small traveling tent show like Hoxie.

Things happen. Equipment breaks down. Animals get sick, or escape as with a 17-foot python named Big Sid who slithered away from a circus in a Grand Rapids, Michigan, suburb last June and stayed at large for a month. Performers get lost traveling from one town to the next. And so on.

"We're the fastest moving show in the business," boasts Paul Robinson, a Hoxie Bros. front man, publicity man and trouble shooter. The circus is completing an eight month, 25,000 mile tour of 17 states that has taken it from Florida—its home base through the East and as far west as Illinois.

"Hoxie Bros., as seen on a recent five-day visit, includes some 85 people, including 29 performers, their families, almost a score of workmen who erect and tear down the tent and perform other chores for as little as \$50 a week plus room and board, and animal handlers, prop men, concession workers and front-office personnel like the ticket clerk.

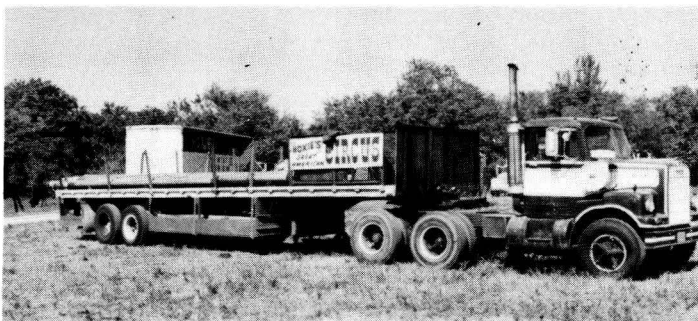
"There are seven ponies, six elephants, five lions, three pythons (including one said to be 19 feet long), a chimpanzee, a llama and an Arabian camel too cantankerously old to perform any more. (It is tethered outside the tent before performances to attract patrons).

"Then there is the equipment: 17 trucks, including several big tractor-trailers, to haul such diverse cargoes as elephants, electrical generators, tents, bleachers for 3,200 people and a fake Egyptian mummy for the side show.

"Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey it isn't, but Hoxie's one-ring show has its fans.

"For a small circus, this is the best one we've ever seen," said John Grant, who recently took his family of five to see the show in Elkton, Maryland.

"Hoxie general agent Joe MacMahon doesn't think things are going so gloriously well. Is Hoxie profitable? 'It hasn't been good, but it hasn't been bad,' he says cautiously. He complains that more and more adults are 'coming alone without their kids or grandchildren,' thus cutting sales of elephant rides, circus T-shirts, cotton candy and other concession items.



Great American pole semi in winter quarters in 1978. Bob MacDougall photo.

"Mr. MacMahon and his clerical assistants have a tractor-trailer all to themselves, with air conditioning, carpets, electric typewriters, calculators, four desks and a safe. They keep a close eye on receipts, and they need to; they are paying out the money about as fast as they receive it.

"It costs \$3,800 a day to keep Hoxie on the road; that means 'at least 1,800 to 2,000 people attending each day,' says Mr. MacMahon. The weekly payroll is \$15,000, including almost \$1,800 for the five-person aerial group, and almost \$1,000 a week for the five member tumbling act, circus officials say.

"Mr. MacMahon figures the circus is taking in gross revenues of \$970,000 during the current 32-week tour. But, he says, more than \$195,000 of that will go to charitable organizations such as Kawanis clubs and volunteer fire companies, which sponsor the circus and make preparations locally in return for a share of the proceeds. Another \$205,000 or so is going to professional promoters who sell advance tickets by telephone. That leaves the circus with about \$670,000 for daily operations, moving from town to town and supporting the winter quarters in

Hoxie Bros. Circus midway with ape show from Great American in Bradenton, Florida on October 19, 1978. Fred Pfening photo.



Florida, Paul Robinson, the circus spokesman, says.

"As a recent visit made clear, managing this mobile menagerie presents endless problems. The Hoxie hands seem to be up to the task. For instance, Mr. Maloney, the organist, used the ringmaster's public address system to project music until his broken down amplifier got fixed.

"At breakfast time in Salem, New Jersey, Verna Smith, the cook, discovers that the cookhouse hasn't arrived from yesterday's town, 120 miles distant. She scurries out to a local McDonald's and buys enough sausage, eggs, and muffins to feed the 45 people who normally eat at the cookhouse.

"In Wilmington the lot is so weedy that it slows the movement of props in and out of the ring. This slackens the show's pace, worrying ringmaster James Royal, who says, 'We don't want to bore the audience.'

"At Elkton, Maryland, the circus sets up in a local park, where Bonnie and Hazel, the biggest of the elephants, begin tearing the foliage off a maple tree with their trunks. Eating the leaves, they use the branches to swat insects on their backs. 'Oh, oh, we'll have a beef about that,' says a Hoxie troupier. The elephants quickly are moved out of range of the tree.

"But those are relatively minor problems. Relaxing with a drink in his comfortable Airstream trailer, Leonard ("Hoxie") Tucker, who owns the circus, recalls how a windstorm destroyed the circus tent two hours before a performance in New Jersey last year. As lions roar and elephants trumpet in the background, Mr. Tucker genially shows snapshots of the episode.

"The circus performed that night an hour behind schedule, without a tent. Side walling continued for five weeks, the time it took for delivery of a new tent, 140 feet in diameter, about 45 feet high and priced at \$49,000, paid in cash.

"Everything we do is cash," says Mr. Tucker. As Hoxie Bros. moves around, it confronts ever differing state and local regulations. New Jersey, for instance, required the show to collect a 5% tax on admissions, but Pennsylvania didn't have such a tax, Mr. Robinson, the circus spokesman, says.

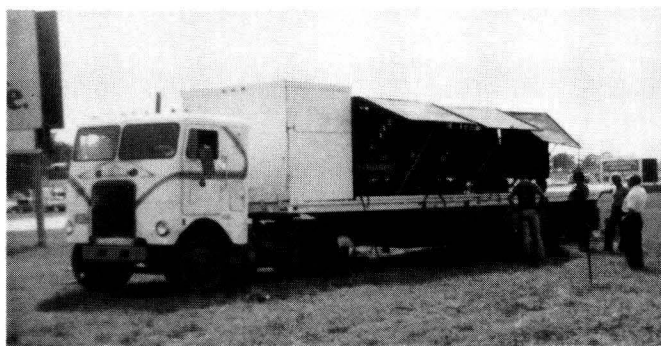
"The circus routine attracts an unusual group of employees, from drifters who stay a few weeks or months to old hands with decades of tenure. There is 'Bandanna,' so known for the scarf that he habitually wears, who tends the ponies while they lick his cheeks; 'Dry County,' who got his nickname some 30 years ago when he bought a six-pack of beer in a 'wet' county and carried it unwittingly into a 'dry' one, where he was arrested; and Leo, the elephant handler, who curses the animals furiously but tends them year after year.

"In more than one case, it is a family enterprise. For instance, Buck Smith, the mechanic, whose wife Verna is the cook, has one daughter who performs on the trapeze; a second who assists the magician, and rides an elephant in the opening number; a third daughter, aged two, who rides a baby elephant in that same number and two sons who sell food and souvenirs and occasionally help Buck with mechanical work.

"Having people perform several tasks is no novelty; the show is perpetually short handed. The trapeze performers rig the net for their own act, scrambling about in overalls thrown over their tights. Presently, they shuck the overalls and perform.

"Sometimes we're so tired from moving all those poles around, it's hard to get started," says aerialist Patricia Reges."

The Great American show eliminated its canvas spool truck and loaded its orange and blue the big top on the pole semi. The equipment on this show was upgraded by the use of some Diamond S Rodeo trucks including a two wheeled trailer office wagon and a semi trailer housing the light plant. The side show top also came from Schappacher.



Wild animal act semi trailer rebuilt for the 1978 season. Pfening Archives.

The show carried three elephants, a camel, llama and burro. The show moved on six semis, two straight bed trucks and two trailers. It played in Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas and Mississippi before closing in Cairo, Georgia on October 25. Great American business for the season was excellent, while Hoxie's was spotty.

The June 3 *Amusement Business* published this report on the Great American show: "Opening in Vero Beach, Florida April 5, Hoxie Tucker's Great American Circus reported excellent business on its spring dates in Florida and Georgia.

"Matinee performances are at 6 p.m. with night show at 8:15. Admission prices are \$3.50 for adults and \$2.50 for children at the show grounds and \$3 and \$2 if bought in advance.

"Big show performance has several features including Bob Lang Family (6) doing juggling and trampoline; Barry Miller Troupe (3) rola-bola, juggling and comedy trapeze; Norman Miller, trapeze and gorilla parody; Ralph Rucker and wife with trained dogs and goats, and swinging ladders; Lynn Hannigan in a featured web number; Jacqueline Brafford on bounding rope; and Margarita, hair hang. Buck Nolan, 7 feet and 6 inches tall, is

Big top poles, seats and ring curb semi on Hoxie Bros. in 1979. Pfening Archives.

producing clown, assisted by Donni Stambaugh and Gary Ellis.

"Music was provided by Dave Miller, organist and Bob Gardiner on drums. Side show features the show's animals and Richard Kehoe, fire-eater, and Don Leslie, sword swallowing and tattoo.

"The staff included Jimmy Silverlake, manager; Bob Hannigan, office manager; Billy Martin, ringmaster; Rick Paska, superintendent of the three performing elephants; Bill Ostriche, superintendent of props; John Van Meter, outdoor advertising and Enoch Bradford, boss canvasman."

1979

Joe MacMahon returned as general agent and road manager. His wife Donna handled the office. Jim Royal was back as ringmaster. Verna Smith again had the cookhouse. Jack Jackson was the new band leader. Whitey Black was concession manager and assistant manager. Henry Thompson took over as side show manager. James "Dutch" Crawford continued as elephant boss. George Hodgdon was press agent.

The show had experimented with shopping center engagements but returned in 1979 to the tried and true sponsored arrangement. MacMahon picked up many of the sponsors in territory formally covered by the Beatty-Cole, King, and Sells & Gray shows.

The show was painted by Henry Thompson. The canvas spool truck was lost in a winter quarters fire before the show opened. An ape show was on the midway, along with the side show, a moon walk and an elephant ride. There were seven elephants on the show, two large ones and five babies, including one African.

A near catastrophe occurred in the Hoxie winter quarters just a few hours before the show was about to pull out for the opening stand. Apparently a workingman had been drinking and smoking while sitting in the cab of the 1978 GMC canvas spool truck. He either went to sleep or dropped a cigarette on the seat, causing it to catch on fire. Dutch Crawford, Michael Cecere and Walter Stimax moved quickly to save the big top. They quickly unloaded the forklift from its trailer, tied the big top to it and unspooled the canvas. The tent was unloaded in five minutes. A new truck was bought and delivered to the show a few days into the season.

The season opened in Hialeah, Florida on April 17 and moved north through Georgia, the Carolinas and Virginia.



Frank Felt visited the show in McLean, Virginia on May 19 and provided an informative report to the *White Tops*: "The Hoxie Bros. 1979 edition again provided fans with what they have come to expect, a first class highly entertaining performance that is circus."

"Most of the money for capital improvements in 1979 went into refurbishing and enlarging the smaller Great American Circus. As a result Hoxie Bros. went out with last year's big top, a 140 foot round top with one 50 and the four year old 40 x 80 foot side show top formerly on Great American. The rolling stock was not repainted except for the two side show banner line semis. The rule appeared to be that anything visible to the show going public be kept in sparkling condition in the Hoxie tradition."

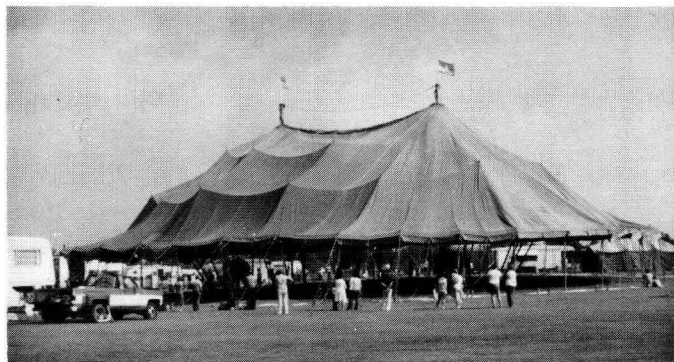
"A large and flashy midway fronted the show with the side show and an elephant ride on the right and on the left side a moon bounce, the large office and ticket semi and a pit show. The side show contained lead stock and platform acts including a sword swallower, magician and punch show. Side show manager was the veteran Henry Thompson. In lieu of the rag banner line two well decorated semi-trailers fronted the side show. They did not contain the usual banner pictorials but highly decorated with multi-colored scroll work and lettering."

"Later in the season Tucker closed the side show. The elephants and lead stock were then staked out behind the two semi as a free exhibition."

"In the big top everything looked bright with excellent lighting, a fine sound system, brightly painted props and wardrobe. The single ring was surrounded by 14 high planks with no extra charge for special or reserved seats. The one ring performance through proper production moves at as fast pace as any three ring show and eliminates complaint of public about being the far end of the tent too far away from the center ring."

"The usual high standard Hoxie per-

Hoxie Bros. blue two center pole big top in 1979. Pfening Archives.



formance was presided over by singing ringmaster-announcer Jim Royal. His baritone voice and clear diction were in the mold of the famous Harold Ronk. The performance running order at McLean, Virginia was as follows:

"1. Circus on on Parade, grand entry with all performers and animals."

"2. Michael Cecere presenting three male and a female lion in an American style fighting lion act."

"3. The two Campa Sisters and the Stimax trio present juggling turns on the track while the arena is dismantled."

"4. Listner Duo (the Armstrongs) aerial perch."

"5. Patti Antalack in a dressage number."

"6. Color book pitch with two clowns."

"7. James "Dutch" Crawford with Hoxie's five baby elephants."

"8. Tight wire, Elizabeth Campa."

"9. Clown carpenter gag."

"10. Patti Antalack and the Park Avenue Mutts and trained pony."

"11. Jim Royal and wife with a neon tube illusion."

"12. Clown rocket gag."

"13. Elizabeth, Sonya and Juan Campa, unicycles."

"Intermission"

"14. Trunk illusion with the Royals."

"15. Regalito and Company (the Campa family) musical clowns."

"16. Clown walk."

"17. Stimax chimp act with two chimps."

"18. Five white liberty ponies presented by Patti Antalack."

"19. Aerial ballet featuring Donna Novotny Armstrong on the single trap with the Campa sisters and Mrs. Royal."

"20. Clown finale."

"21. Loyal Repensky riding act featuring young Timi Loyal and wife on two beautiful rosin backs."

"22. Elephant finale presented by James Crawford and Tiffany."

"Backing the performance with authentic live circus music was Jack Jackson, trumpet; Art Pendleton, organ, and Howard Grady on drums. The clown alley, one of the largest and best in Hoxie history, was headed by producing clown. Walt Stimax supported by Mike Simp-



Michael Cecere and his lion act on Hoxie Bros. in 1979. Michael Cecere collection.

son, Jim Jackson, Carolyn Quethera, Rollo and the Campas in their fine musical number."

Clowning showed work and planning with sharp costuming and plenty of props."

The nineteen pieces of rolling stock consisted of the following:

1. Semi. Office and tickets.
2. Semi. Generator, lighting props and sleeper.
3. Semi. Ape pit show.
4. Semi. Elephants and lead stock (side show front).
5. Semi. Elephants (side show front).
6. Semi. Side show.
7. Semi. Mechanics shop and sleeper.
8. Semi. Lion act (6 cross cages, arena, props and elephant tubs).
9. Semi. Big top poles, seats and ring curbs.
10. Straight truck. Big top canvas spool.
11. Straight truck. Dual stake driver and stakes.
12. Straight truck. Water tank; pulled trailer.
13. Trailer. Working men sleeper.
14. Step van. Wardrobe; pulled trailer.
15. Trailer. Band stand and sleeper.
16. Pick-up. Small tank mounted on bed pulls.
17. Trailer. Cook house.
18. Pick-up. Elephant ride.
19. Trailer. Grease joint.

By late May the show was in Ohio. It was in New Jersey in June and July, earlier than usual. The show went into New England and then made its first visit to New York state.

During the summer a change was made in the starting time of the matinee from 6:00 to 4:00 pm. The performance was so long it was not possible to reset the big top for the 8:00 night show. The route took the show to Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois through most of September. A late fall route took the show to the Gulf Coast through the Florida panhandle. The



Hoxie Bros. half sheet poster used in the late 1970s. Pfening Archives.

show went into Mississippi, then played a three day stand in New Orleans. The long season closed on November 18 in Edgewater, Florida.

"Hoxie" was left off the title of the Great American show. There were three elephants, a camel and some ponies were carried. The midway had two walk through pit shows, an ape and a snake. The air conditioned gorilla semi did not return in 1979. It was replaced by a walk through ape show owned by Otto Berosini which had previously been on the Royal American carnival.

The show opened using the 1978 big top on April 3 in Groveland, Florida. The show moved north quickly and was in Pennsylvania by May. Frank Felt provided this report for the *White Tops*: "One of the phenomenal success stories of the 1979 outdoor circus season has been the tour of Hoxie Tucker's Great American Circus under a 75 day sellout to Allan C. Hill Enterprises of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania."

"Last winter Allan Hill worked out a deal with Hoxie Tucker after having successfully promoted dates for Great American in previous seasons. The 75 day tour was planned to run exclusively in Pennsylvania."

"Hoxie Tucker agreed to keep his larger Hoxie Bros. Circus out of its usual Pennsylvania dates. Thus Great American could play its best towns and pick up some of the more lucrative Hoxie Bros. dates as well."

"The promotion turned out to be a smashing success with full and straw houses the rule for Great American during most of its Pennsylvania tour. Business slowed a bit in July but still held strongly enough to make the overall project highly profitable for all concerned."

"The promotion used was the phone room type and Hill has displayed his abil-

ity to use the system

not only to sell advance sale tickets successfully but to generate crowds on show day that packed the tent. This has meant profits not only for the promoter but to the people on the show itself as well as providing the kind of large crowds that give a performer that special satisfaction. No one can feel their best performing constantly to empty

seats. "Young Mr. Hill is well versed in the circus business. His father is Bill Hill, veteran showman and former manager of the Great American Circus. Bill, now fully recovered from open heart surgery, was on hand at all dates to assist his son. Also working on the dates was Allan's brother, Ted."

"A beautiful clear day, two straw houses and a new big top arrived on Hoxie's Great American Circus at Waynesboro, Pennsylvania on May 12."

"The new big top is an 80 foot round with two 30 and one 40 foot middle pieces. It is twenty feet longer than the one it replaced. Aside from a small dining top the show carries no other tents. The new white top was a truly beautiful sight set against the background of the clear blue sky and green mountains. The midway added to the color with the large, well decorated panel front on the gorilla show and gaily painted ticket trailer on the left and the colorful snake show and concessions trailer on the right. A pony ride and elephant ride were also on the midway but no side show is carried."

"Inside the big top all ring curbs and props were well painted and flashed. An organ mounted in a trailer which was backed into the big top provided the music for the performance."

"Seating at Waynesboro consisted of fourteen sections of nine-high planks on the long side, eleven sections on the far end and short side. Three sections of planks and a novelty stand were at the front end of the top. By the time the show reached Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania on June 20 a couple of sections of new seating had been

constructed to fill out the enlarged top.

"The rolling stock was in good shape and well painted and decorated. The show owned transportation consisted of:

- "1. Semi. Snake show and sleeper.
- "2. Semi. Gorilla show, midway walk through.
- "3. Semi (small). Grease joint.
- "4. Semi. Generator and sleeper.
- "5. Semi. Big top including poles, rigging, canvas seats and ring curbs.
- "6. Semi. Elephants, camel, llama and ponies.
- "7. Straight truck. Gilly and sound truck.
- "8. Trailer. Cook house.
- "9. Straight truck. Dual stake driver and water tank.
- "10. Trailer. Tractor with front end loader.
- "11. Step Van. Wardrobe.
- "12. Trailer. Organ and props.
- "13. Pick-Up. Gas tank.
- "14. Trailer. Office and tickets.

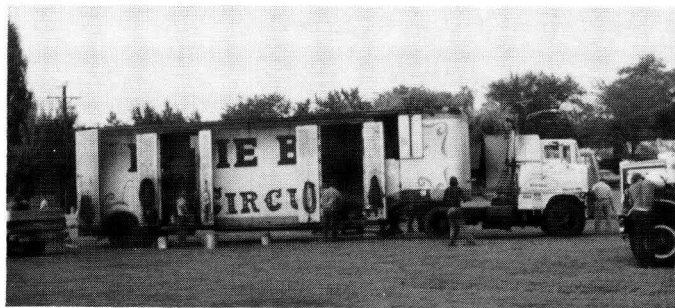
"The semi trailer containing the snake pit show and sleeper was completely demolished in Connelsville, Pennsylvania on May 23, when it was in a collision with another tractor trailer. By the time the show reached Mechanicsburg on June 20 a new semi trailer had been refitted to handle the show and sleeper. Painter Dave Knoderer was due in from Florida to flash up the unit."

"The well paced performance directed by announcer Billy Martin was well received by big crowds. It is built chiefly around four families—the Silverlakes, Kohlrisers, Langs and Bradfords. The three elephants were presented by Joe Friscoe. Buck Nolan, Jose Diaz and Archie Silverlake were the clowns."

"The staff included Hoxie Tucker, owner; Jim Silverlake, manager; Jim Raab, general agent; Marilyn Silverlake, office; Enoch Bradford, superintendent and boss canvasman; Dickie Palmer, concessions; Joe Friscoe, Jr., elephants; Jose Diaz, electrician; Dick McAllister, 24 hour man; Johnnie Marshal, pit show and purchasing agent; and John Van Meter, bill posting."

Following the Hill dates the show

Hoxie Bros. elephant semi-trailer in 1979. Pfening Archives.



headed south through Kentucky, Tennessee and Georgia. The closing stand was in Swainsboro, Georgia on October 13.

1980

At the end of the 1979 season Michael Cecere left the show to work for Jungle Larry's African Safari. Tucker was unable to secure a replacement to work the act.

Early in the year the Hoxie show destroyed five lions that had been used in the wild animal act. The news services picked up the story and it went out across the country. Tucker termed the animals outlaws that could no longer be handled by a trainer.

A new Florida law said the state would no longer license individuals to own potentially dangerous exotic animals such as lions and tigers. This law prevented cats from being given away, which Tucker would have been glad to do. No zoo wanted them and since the show didn't desire to carry them for exhibition purposes only there was no alternative left but to have them destroyed.

While in quarters, the motorized vehicles received a new paint job by Thomas Quinn. The white and purple color scheme long associated with the show was retained. A new combination cookhouse-sleeper truck was built and four new diesel tractors added. On opening day the show moved on sixteen trucks, most of them semis. The big top was the 2 center pole, 140 foot round top made of blue canvas the show had used for a couple of years. The side show-menagerie, operated by Roger Boyd Jr., used a square end, red, green and white striped tent. A show-owned Himalayan Monster pit show was on the midway. Mel Silverlake's snake show, a concession trailer, elephant ride, pony ride, novelty, and floss stands completed the midway layout. The show carried seven elephants, Hazel, Bonnie, Janet, Kelly, Stacy, Hoxie, and Irene.

Joe MacMahon routed the show and served as manager on the road. Policy was to use sponsored dates with phones.

The 1980 season began March 29 at Miami Lakes, Florida. In April the route carried the show northward into Georgia. A reviewer caught it at Jonesboro, April 21, and observed at the time the performance was the strongest he had ever witnessed on the show. Music was furnished by a 3 piece band led by Lee Maloney.

In late April the show moved into Tennessee for two stands. It then returned to Georgia, headed eastward and entered South Carolina in May. The remainder of

May was spent touring both Carolinas, Virginia, and Maryland.

This short report appeared in the May 10 *Amusement Business*: "Early dates for the new 1980 edition of Hoxie Brothers Circus played in Florida, Georgia and Alabama have mainly been good, Hoxie Tucker, owner-manager, reported.

"After wintering in permanent quarters in Miami, the 38th annual tour was started in Miami Lakes, Florida on March 29.

"While attendance at most stands has been up, the show is feeling the effects of inflation, which is squeezing profits. Increased expenses are more pressing now on shows moving every day and playing seven days a week, according to Tucker.

"For instance, take the matter of fuel



The Hoxie Bros. light plant semi-trailer in 1980. Pfening Archives.

for the moves,' he pointed out. 'Last year it was about \$1,200 per week and now it has jumped to \$3,500.' One solution may be to play extended dates of two days or more, he said, 'but we are already booked to November for mainly one day stands.'

"Joe MacMahon is general agent, in charge of booking and routing the Hoxie Brothers Circus, and a smaller unit, Hoxie's Great American Circus. The latter show opened in Apopka, Florida, April 25. Others on the Hoxie show include John Lewis, public relations and press; MacMahon's wife, Donna, secretary; Bill Brickle, ringmaster and announcer; Roger Boyd Jr., side show manager; Lee Maloney, band director; Thomas Quinn, boss canvasman; James (Dutch) Crawford, superintendent of animals; and Billy Griffin, lot superintendent.

"As in former years, the Hoxie performance is given in a large, blue, round top. Nearly all acts are in one center ring, except for web and other aerial numbers and clown acts on the hippodrome track. Admission this year is \$4 for adults and \$3 for children. There are no reserved seats. Performance running time is two hours 27 minutes, with one brief intermission.

"Acts include the Loyal-Repensky

troupe of bareback riders; Regalito Family (four), musical and comedy act; Chimps, worked by Walt and Mildred Stimax; Bill Brickle's Poodle Fantasy; Isabel and Marie, balancing; Valentino Duo, aerialists; Elizabeth and Sonya on wires; Lesner Duo, gymnasts; Fred White in a high aerial number, which includes a barefoot heel hang from the top of the tent; Mlle. Danuska, in a spectacular high trapeze offering surrounded by five girls on webs; Fred Abbott and Tamara, in a comedy routine that has a surprise finish; Ramon Espana on rola-bola; and trained ponies worked by Dutch Crawford, who also works the herd of seven elephants in the finale.

"Clown numbers, all new, drew heavy applause. Jim Jackson and Bill Brickle are producing clowns. Others were Ray Salemino, Jeff Chalmers and Mack Harris.

"New to the show this season is Jimmy Kernan, who has the inside stands."

The show was in West Virginia in June when the first of two major blow downs hit at Morgantown and destroyed the two center pole round big top. The old single center pole round top, which had been in storage, was shipped to the show and put into use as the route continued through West Virginia and later in Pennsylvania. Hoxie moved into New York on June 9 at Celoran, then came back into Pennsylvania at Scranton on June 19. It then moved on to pick up dates in Delaware and Maryland before the end of the month. At Gaithersburg, Maryland on June 29 the second blow down occurred. This time the high winds destroyed the single center pole big top which cleaned the Hoxie circus out of tents. During the blow downs the side show stayed up and sustained only minor damage. Tucker was able to secure an old top that Beatty-Cole had in storage and it was put into use a few days later. The single ring format was continued under the newly acquired top which was tailored into a 150 x 200 foot oblong shaped tent. It was supported by two center poles.

The show went into New Jersey where it played only sixteen days. This was a far cry from prior seasons when Hoxie would be in Jersey for as long as two months. Later in July the show was routed into New York and on into New England for stands in Vermont and New Hampshire before returning to New York at Glen Falls, July 20. August saw a westward move through Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and into Illinois and several dates in the Chicago area. In September the show covered a wide territory reaching from Ohio south through Kentucky, Vir-

ginia, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. It continued in the deep south through October and was back in its home state of Florida before the end of the month. Final stand of the 1980 season was at Deerfield Beach, Florida on November 9. The year was a rough one complete with the two blow downs, several truck wrecks, and many personnel and performance changes.

In contrast to the tough times of the larger show, Tucker's number two circus, Great American Circus came through with a profitable and relatively uneventful season. Jim Silverlake was again the manager and the show travelled on eight trucks using the same big top that had been in use during much of 1979. The band consisted of Bobby Green, air calliope, and Bob Gardner on drums. Green also served as ringmaster and announcer.

Missing from the midway for the first time in several seasons was the gorilla exhibit which was sold. A reviewer who caught the show early in the season reported the big top was an 80 foot round with one 40 and two 30's, white canvas, with blue and white striped side-wall. Motorized equipment was neatly painted in color scheme of red, white, and blue. The side show was equipped with a canvas banner line. A concession stand, elephant ride, and snake show exhibit with 2 pythons completed the midway layout. Animals included three elephants, Betty, Myrtle, and Jessie; ten dogs; a camel; and two goats. The show had a new 40 foot long office-ticket semi with three ticket windows.

Great American opened April 25 at Apopka, Florida, then rapidly moved north into Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky. It was in Ohio by the end of May. The show next moved farther eastward and was in New Jersey in June and remained in that state until the 21st. The first of a series of dates booked by the Allen C. Hill family began in Easton, Pennsylvania and the show was routed by the Hills through Pennsylvania for the rest of June, all of July, and into August. The show returned to New Jersey in mid August and remained for a month before moving south through Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas.

In late September the show was in Georgia. Final stands of the season came in October in Florida with the last date at Bartow on October 13. At the close it was reported the show was using nine trucks and the big top was still in good condi-

tion. The side show was housed in a square end tent and featured five scene old time canvas banner line. Music was by organ.

1981

Joe MacMahon left the show after the 1980 tour. Tucker appointed new managers on both of his shows in 1981. John Lewis, a long time associate of Tucker's, headed the Hoxie show. Allan C. Hill took over as manager of the Great American. Hill and his father had controlled most of the Great American route for a couple of years. This was the first step toward Allan Hill's purchase of the Tucker operation.



Hoxie Bros. office-ticket semi-trailer in 1980. Fred Pfening photo.

Hoxie Bros. Circus opened its season April 6 in Key Biscayne, Florida. John Lewis assumed command as manager. He was joined in the concession department by Jim Silverlake, former manager of Great American Circus. Using some phone dates set by former manager MacMahon the show relied heavily upon that method of promotion in the southern areas. Few phone dates were set for the northern tour, but some were used when individual promoters booked the show. The show moved on eleven trucks, with only two not pulling semi-trailers.

The performance was presented in a two pole bale ring top with two rows of quarter poles, all aluminum, formerly owned by Beatty-Cole. The canvas was rolled on a two reel spool canvas truck.

Bleacher seating was used exclusively, with all the lumber for the one ring presentation on one truck which also carried the poles and rigging. The midway side show, managed by Roger Boyd, Jr., contained the animals and some working acts. Jim Silverlake's privately owned snake show was also on the midway. There was also a pit show containing a wooden carving of a humanoid type figure in a trailer. In reality, the trailer was used for concession storage while traveling, and the pit show. It turned an oth-

erwise empty trailer into a moneymaking device.

The performance was given in one ring, with illusionist Gary Holveck as the announcer. A four piece band, headed by Charles Moyer, played circusy music throughout the performance. Animal acts were provided by Mike and Randon Rice, who did four acts, and added a fifth near the end of the season. Randon first presented three chimps in display 5 and Mike worked a baby elephant in display 9. In the second half of the show Mike presented a big horse, a miniature pony and a dog, while Randon presented her Russian Wolfhounds in display 13. Mike finished the performance with the five

Hoxie Bros. elephants. Ground acts included the two acts of the Bruski family doing bikes and sword balancing; the Bertloffs doing two turns, adagio and single trapeze; Mrs. Roger Boyd, Jr. did a hair hang, and Gary Holvak did a series of small illusions in the first half and the trunk escape (Metamorphosis) in the second half. There was one clown who performed between acts.

Animals carried by the show included the private stock of the Rices which included a small elephant with tusks, three chimps, a horse, and a pony, and seven dogs, plus the six Hoxie owned elephants. Five of the younger ones were trained in a very fast and pleasing act (one of the younger bulls was a male African) while the sixth, a large Indian female, was used for work and riding. Also carried were a camel, two donkeys and a pony. All show-owned animals were exhibited in the side show tent, a brown 30 by 60 foot tent.

The show opened in Florida and quickly moved north, playing the first Georgia date on April 18. By the 28th of May, it was in New Jersey, playing a two day stand in Paterson the weekend of 29-30 and within one week entered New York, then went west to pick up some major dates for the Shrine. Because of an agreement not to play Pennsylvania to any extent to keep the state fresh for Great American, the Hoxie show played only two days there. Hoxie then doubled back into New York state, first to the east, then north, finally leaving the state at Ithaca.

Taking a day off for travel, the show jumped to Maryland, picked up some dates and returned to Jersey for the 4th of July in Maplewood. Touring Jersey until the 14th, the show returned to New York state, and suffered a blow down of the big top on July 19, in Saratoga Springs. After a few dates in New England starting with



Hoxie ticket semi and big top in Carrollton, Georgia on April 27, 1981. Joe Bradbury photo.

Bennington, Vermont on July 20 and leaving on the 27th to enter Ticonderoga, New York on the 28th, the show moved rapidly across the state to pick up its first Ohio town at Geneva on August 3.

The show crisscrossed Ohio, Indiana, with a few dates in Michigan. Hoxie entered Illinois in September, remaining there until the 18th when it headed south through Kentucky and Tennessee. Hoxie picked up some dates in Alabama and turned west into Louisiana at Slidell on October 9. Playing towns not used by Beatty-Cole and Vargas, a swift turnaround resulted in more Mississippi dates and a run home to Miami where the show closed on November 8, at Deerfield Beach, Florida.

The Great American Circus opened in early April in Florida with Allan C. Hill as manager. It entered Georgia on April 26th at Quitman. It quickly headed north to Pennsylvania to pick up a multitude of dates, entering the Keystone state at Brookville on June 8. These dates, controlled by Hill ran about 80 days, though not consecutively. Hill became manager of the show so he could more closely supervise his family's dates which comprised the bulk of the route.

The backyard of Hoxie Bros. Circus in a stadium in Paterson, New Jersey in 1981. Pfening Archives.



Travelling on only eight trucks and trailers, the show had a seating capacity about 1500 which sufficed for most of the towns played. The performance consisted of four groups of families: the Kohlreisers with the animals; the Ferreiras with balancing; the Gary Henry family with clowning and horses; and the Oscar Macias family with balancing, juggling and cloud swing. Single acts were Mary Beaser as Miss Honey, trapeze and Sammy Johnson, rola-bola.

The performance was given in three rings under a push pole top, an 80 foot round with two 30s and a 40 foot middle pieces. The top had been used the two previous seasons. Seating was on wooden bleachers all around the top. The big top, poles, rigging and canvas were carried on one trailer. A fork lift and stake driver were used as labor saving devices. Two elephants were carried but only one performed. Other stock carried were four ponies and a camel. Music for the performance was provided by an organ and drum. Sammy Johnson was announcer.

The midway contained a small side show that housed all the show's stock. Acts in the side show were Sammy Johnson swallowing swords and Mary Beaser as Miss Serpentina. Dayne Muu was the magician. A snake show, moon walk and

concession trailer were also on the midway.

Great American left Pennsylvania the second week of July for New Jersey to begin a string of dates starting with a week in north Jersey, a week in the southern part and then a week near the shore. The show returned briefly to Pennsylvania. By Labor Day it was headed south. The show closed on September 29 at Claxton, Georgia.

The tour was a joint booking venture of the Hill family of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Allan, his father Bill, and his brother Teddy had been the moving force on the show for the past three years. They controlled the bulk of the show's dates, but had been active in the management only this season.

An announcement was made at the beginning of December 1981, that the arrangement would continue between Tucker and Allan Hill in 1982. However, no specific details were made except that James Raab of Reading, Pennsylvania, would be the general agent. Raab was to supervise and direct the regional agents who worked in the remaining territories.

1982

John Lewis again managed the Hoxie show, and served as general agent. Billy Griffin was office manager. Charlie Moy-



The side show banner line consisted of two highly decorated semis in 1981. Fred Pfening photo.

er was band leader and purchasing agent. Jessie Moyer was front door superintendent and had the cookhouse. Russell Smith was transportation superintendent. Tom Quinn was superintendent and canvas boss. Mike Miller was concession manager. Butch Capo was property boss. Joe Frisco was elephant boss.

Hoxie Bros. Circus played a five day date for the Mahi Shrine in Miami from February 10 to 14. The 20th regular season opened at Key Largo, Florida on March 20 and 21. The show used a one pole 160 round top, which had previously seen duty on the Beatty-Cole Circus.

John Van Matre and Chappie Fox visited the show in Melbourne, Florida on March 28. Van Matre recorded his visit: "Arriving in Melbourne we went directly to the parking lot of the mall where last year's Hoxie Bros. big top was pitched. It started to rain. Donning rain coats we went to the cook house and truck and filled our own plates with ham, turkey, potato salad, baked beans and a welcome

cup of coffee and sat down at the plank tables for our circus lunch.

"Not enough can be said for Hoxie Tucker and his show and all performers. Never in my life have I seen such adverse conditions. The tent leaked like a sieve, the hippodrome track was a stream and the ring was a swimming pool. With all of this Hoxie put on the entire show with the exception of the spec. No act was cut and no routines were made a John Robinson. More amazing was the fact the tent was packed, the people came in their rain coats and with umbrellas.

"Imagine sitting under a big top and looking around to find people sitting watching the show from under umbrellas and then cheering and clapping for every act. The longer the show went the worse it got, the rain never stopped. Still no one, not a single person, headed for the exit till shortly before the elephants came on. And they were the last display anyway. Then they began an exodus for the raging

show, beautiful and well kept animals.

"13. Lee Merritt, wire walker.

"14. Clowns.

"15. Kathleen, slide for life.

"16. Indian Princess, dressage act.

"17. Joe Frisco and the five Hoxie elephants, featuring one male African."

A Macon, Georgia Shrine date from April 2-11 was one of the few major Shrine canvas stands in the country. The show was in Tennessee in April. Five stands were played in Missouri before entering Illinois on May 6. Jim Silverlake took over the bulls in Taylorville, Illinois on May 10. At Canton, Illinois, on May 13, the stake driver turned over while making a sharp curve. At Springfield, Illinois on May 15, the show was within fifty miles of Franzen Bros.

The show traveled on eleven trucks which were painted white with purple trim and red lettering, with considerable variation in style.

1. Semi. Ticket-office wagon.

2. Semi. Snake show and concession storage.

3. Semi. Elephants with sleeper for bull hands. Pictorial painting on side for side show banner line.

4. Semi. Elephants and lead stock. Pictorial paints on side for side show banner line.

5. Semi. Electric generator and lighting equipment.

6. Semi. Cookhouse

and sleeper for big top and prop crews.

7. Semi. Flatbed, carried five wild animal cages and arena.

8. Semi. Big top poles, rigging, and seats.

9. Semi. Mechanic truck with welding equipment and tire storage.

10. Concession trailer (22 feet long), pulled by pick-up truck with gasoline tank.

11. Straight truck. Big top canvas spool.

12. Straight truck. Stake driver and water wagon. Pulled flatbed trailer carrying forklift.

13. Step van. Sound truck, carried wardrobe for spec and band.

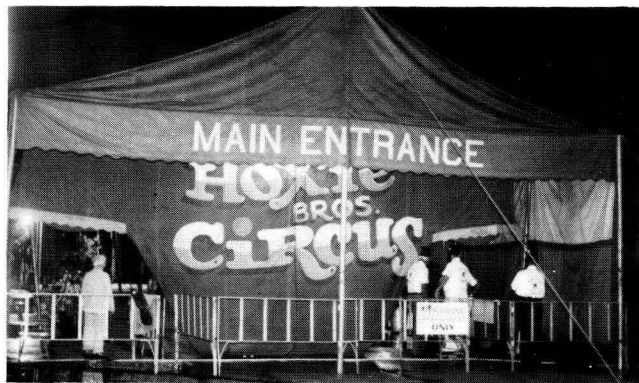
14. Trailer. Sleeper for concession department. Pulled by Jose Dias' camper.

This was three or four fewer tractors than in previous years. The show carried four elephants (three Asiatics and one African), three lions and three tigers for Kramer's cat act, a camel, llamas and ponies.

The night show had to be



Charlie Moyer and the Hoxie band in Springfield, Ohio on June 6, 1982. Fred Pfening photo.



The Hoxie Bros. marquee in Miami, Florida on February 10, 1982. Arnold Bri-to photo.

winds and pouring rain on the outside. Last but far from least the band of six musicians who are without a doubt the greatest circus band on the sawdust trail today, for that number of men.

"The performance in Melbourne was:

"1. Overture by Charlie Moyer and his circus band, outstanding and all true circus.

"2. Spec (not presented because of the weather and conditions).

"3. 'Wild Bill' Kramer with three lions and two tigers.

"4. The Gaonas, trampoline act.

"5. Rolls Duo, aerial cradle.

"6. Clowns.

"7. Holveck, magician.

"8. Educated dogs (6), pony and beautiful marked house cat. A unique act.

"9. Comedy mule.

"10. Spanish web (2 girls) A little weak, should have at least 4 girls up.

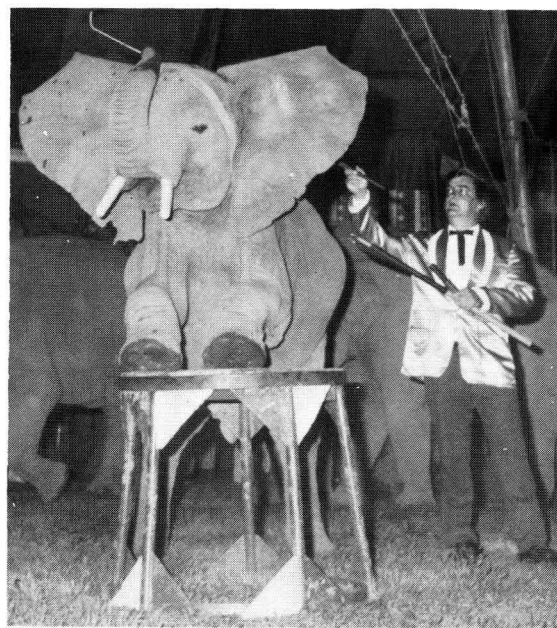
"11. The Flying Gaona's, 3 men and 1 woman. Good act, above average.

"12. Trained Goats (6). Top act of the

stopped half way through in Washington, Illinois on May 20, due to strong winds. On June 8 at Tipp City, Ohio elephant handler Bob Burris was injured by one of his charges and treated for chest injuries. A day later at Covington, Kentucky the elephants ran, but were recaptured sometime later.

The stake driver and water wagon overturned, again, on June 8, a day off, in Tribes Hill, New York. The truck and the fork lift on the truck were demolished. Another truck was purchased in Newburg, New York. A new folk lift was also purchased.

Jim Silverlake presenting the Hoxie Bros. Circus elephants in 1982. Charles Dewein photo.



The show suffered a blow down in Fremont, Ohio on June 15. The show was side walled for four days. The 160 foot big top was repaired and used until June 19 in Warren, Pennsylvania.

A rain storm hit the show in Point Pleasant, New Jersey on July 19. The big top blew down and was beyond repair. The show was side walled in Manahawkin, New Jersey the next day. The 1981 Great American push pole big top, an 80 foot with one 40 and two 30s, was brought out of storage in Jacksonville, Florida. Wesley Brown and Ralph Schapacher brought the tent to the show in a rental truck arriving in Laurel, Maryland, the next stand. The quarter poles had to be cut down for use on the smaller top. The smaller tent did not allow enough height to rig the flying act so the Gaonas left.

The elephant Hoxie ran from the lot in Whitting, New York on August 1. She was located ten miles from the show and returned.

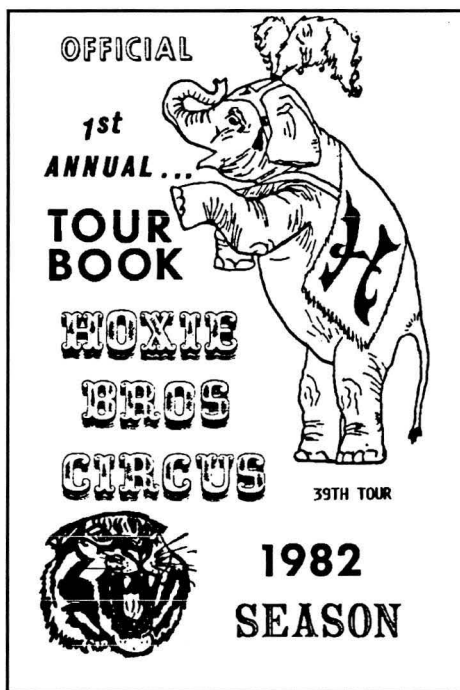
On August 10 in Sea Isle City, New Jersey, a driver fell asleep and totaled the tractor which was pulling the power plant. A second hand tractor was bought in Newburg, New York on August 16.

The six piece band, led by Charles Moyer, played traditional circus music. It was one of the show's strongest aspects. After leaving the Big Apple Circus, Johnny Herriott joined the show and worked a dog act, dressage horse and presented the elephants. The elephant act was fast paced, and considered the highlight of the performance by many. At intermission, the show operated an elephant ride on the midway. Hoxie Bros. ended its season at Fort Myers, Florida with a two day stand on October 7 and 8. The season lasted 203 days, showing in 185 towns in 17 states. Todd Robinson published a fine route book.

Allan C. Hill managed the Great American Circus. It began touring at Palm Coast, Florida on April 21. New this year were the big top and side show tops from Leaf Tent. The show traveled on eight trucks into Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, Kentucky and Pennsylvania. The show had three Asian elephants: Betty, age eight; Bonnie, age thirty-two; and Jessie, thirty-three. The closing was at Daytona Beach, Florida on September 22. The show reportedly had an excellent season.

1983

Tucker toured only one show in 1983, Hoxie's Great American, using the best equipment from his two 1982 shows. Most of it, including the tent, came from Great American Circus.

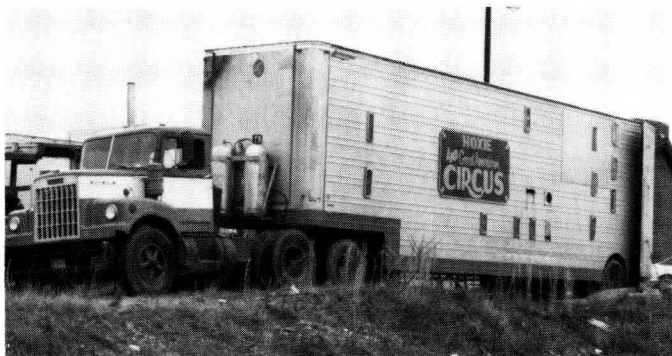


Cover of the 1982 route book, the only one published during the life of Hoxie Bros. Circus.

The show traveled on:

1. Semi No. 21. Office-ticket wagon.
2. Semi. Cook house.
3. Semi. Light plant (on Hoxie Bros. in 1982).
4. Semi No. 39. Concessions.
5. Semi No. 55. Seats, poles and props.
6. Semi No. 73. Sleeper.
7. Semi No. 77. Elephants.
8. Semi No. 84. Lead stock.
9. Straight truck No. 52. Big top canvas spool.
10. Straight truck No. 24. Stake driver water truck.
11. Pick up truck No. 33. Mechanics shop truck.
12. No. 23. Trailer for bandstand.
13. Lowboy trailer for John Deer fork-lift.

The Hoxie Great American cookhouse semi in Douglasville, Georgia on April 7, 1983. Joe Bradbury photo.



The show was tightly packed on heavy duty semi-trailers pulled by large diesel tractors.

The big top was a blue and white push pole 80 foot round top with one 40 and two 30s, new on Great American in 1982. Seating was on 14 high bleachers, used on Hoxie Bros. in 1982. The light plant from Hoxie Bros. was used. A John Deer fork lift was used to load seats. One set of ring curb was used; mats were used in rings one and three.

The side show used a fifty foot top with one 30 foot middle. A canvas banner line was used. A moon bounce, pony ride, elephant ride and concession stands were also on the midway. The Dykes brothers had a novelty stand truck on the midway.

Billy Martin was ringmaster. The performance included two of the Herriott girls, presenting several fine acts; the Loyal riding family whose act was topped by a backward somersault from one horse to another, a rarity in modern circus; and four elephants. Charlie Moyer had a five piece band.

Chuck Werner visited the show in Miami Shores, Florida on March 24 and provided this report to *Circus Report*: "After starting a new season in the Florida Keys, Hoxie's Great American Circus arrived in Miami Shores. It was the first circus in 75 years, and impressed locals with an old-time circus parade. Organized by Karl Larsson, local Shriners, clowns and musicians supplemented Hoxie's in making a dandy presentation. The parade was timed for late afternoon so children of all ages could enjoy it.

"Though thunder showers threatened during set-up, skies cleared and a strong wind was the only problem. Biscayne Dog Track provides a good lot with convenient access and parking. After participating in the parade, the Donniker Bros. circus calliope was positioned near the entrance to get everyone in the mood.

"Allan C. Hill, general manager, was everywhere making sure things went smoothly, which they did! Hoxie Tucker, after surviving a handful of heart attacks, was also there. He admitted he had a doctor's appointment that day, but hadn't kept it yet. The Mayor, an honorary ringmaster, presented Tucker with a proclamation welcoming the circus and declaring it to be 'Circus Day in Miami Shores.'

"Ringmaster Billy Martin makes a great talker on the midway, getting people into the side show before and after the performances. He doubles as a fire-eater, along with several other performers as magician, snake handler rubber girl and 'electric'

girl. This, plus a small petting zoo, was great fun before entering the big top.

"Although the chilling wind had an effect on people, Jessie Moyer's warm welcome as she took tickets thawed everyone. Her husband Charlie leads a small but outstanding musical accompaniment, providing quality rather than quantity. After customary announcements a colorful parade of performers and animals augmented by local scout groups, the show's sponsor, started the show. An added attraction, paid for by a local merchant, Gilda Crisitiani presented her uncaged leopards and black panther, waltzing with her cat, while local Arthur Murray dancers waltzed in the end ring.

"Little Buck [Nolan], the tallest clown I've ever seen (without stilts) provided some humor while props were reset. It's too bad he's alone though, as a show this size and this good should have more than one clown! Following Herriott's Poodle & Pony Review, Jana Dubsky mounted a huge silver moon and trap, complemented by aerial ladder displays in the ends. After another clown gag and a coloring book pitch, Sonya and Bobby Fairchild commanded everyone's attention with their wild west whip and knife display.

"Miushi Yamoto (Suarez) amazed everyone with her hair suspension, followed by Christine Herriott atop Lady Dancer in a high school display. A peanut pitch preceded Cinderella (Dubsky) and Her Birds of Paradise and Robert James (Fairchild) with his sword balancing in the end rings. The Loyal Suarez riders rounded out the first portion of the show with Timi Loyal doing his usual excellent performance.

"After intermission elephant rides, Christine Herriott and Bobby Fairchild juggled in the ends, while the center ring was occupied by Billy Martin juggling with rola-bola. The Valentino Duo (Loyals) smiled and styled their way through a graceful double trap routine followed by a balloon pitch.

"Christa Dubsky and her Las Vegas Poodle Style Show was a colorful diversion before Bobby Fairchild and a gorilla parody (Billy Martin). Joe Frisco handled the Hoxie herd of four elephants. Again proving that quality is better than quantity, providing the traditional finish to the performance.

"Hoxie's Great American Circus was a good clean looking show with quality wardrobe and quality performers offering more than your money's worth."



Great American stake driver-water truck in 1983. Joe Bradbury photo.

July found the show in the Pennsylvania-New Jersey area. The June 25 *Amusement Business* published this report on the show: "Wharton, New Jersey. Only a year after celebrating its 50th anniversary, Hoxie Bros. Circus has merged with the Tucker owned Great American Circus to take what manager Allan C. Hill calls it a more compressed show on the road this season.

"We've compressed it mainly for economical reasons," said Hill, who also managed Great American and continues to operate his Harrisburg, Pennsylvania based Allan C. Hill Productions as president and producer. "Actually, it's a stronger show. By combining the two circuses, the result is stronger than either of the two were separately. We took the best equipment from both shows, leaving back-ups in the headquarters in Miami if

Lucio Cristiani woking leopards on Hoxie's Great American Circus in 1983. Charles DeWein photo.



we need them. And we've got a strong roster of 15 acts.'

"The new circus is only slightly smaller (by one truck) than the Hoxie Brothers show, which traveled with 14 semis, but is larger than the Great American, which traveled with nine trucks. The show moves with 75 personnel, including the performers, on a back breaking route that kicked off in mid March at a Miami date near the Florida headquarters. Jumps for the duration of the season are

just a fact of life, with Hill commenting, 'As a rule, we go seven days a week for two shows a day for seven solid months. I don't believe in days off.'

"The show went on as scheduled for an afternoon performance here on May 26, when *AB* visited. In spite of a sudden cloudburst that left ankle deep water in the center ring, the performers paced through the two-hour show like seasoned troopers.

"This is nothing compared to the rain we've had at some of the dates we've played this season," said Hill, gathering circus band leader and purchasing agent Charlie Moyer and ringmaster Billy Martin into the flooded center ring to pose for a picture. 'Nobody would believe this otherwise, right?'

"The flooded performing area, which was being pumped by the local police, which also happened to be sponsoring the date, was representative of some dates the circus has played since the route carried them into the wettest season to hit the northeast in several years. But the rainy spring season that has played havoc with open-air amusement businesses working the east coast hasn't had an adverse affect on the tented show.

"We're doling absolutely terrific business on every stop," commented Hill noting an increase in attendance and in grosses, a result of increased telephone advance work. People are spending more money. Our grosses are up, which means more people are coming out to the circus. Telephone advance is my backbone for bookings, although here in Wharton we used a sponsor, the police department. With that type of community sponsor, which is what we look for most of the time, we don't have to worry as much with ticket distribution since they are responsible for circulating lots of free kids tickets.'

"On an upcoming July date, The Circus Fans of America have chosen to feature the Hoxie Brothers Great American Circus next month when the group holds its 52nd Annual Convention in Philadelphia, Penn-

sylvania July 13-17. The show will play in nearby Levittown, for the sponsoring local Lion's Club. "Another of the high-lights during the confab will be the final banquet on Saturday night (16), where the guest speaker will be Hoxie Tucker. The venerable circus owner is rarely involved with the daily operation of the show, due as much to its daily rigors as to his 50 plus years in the business.

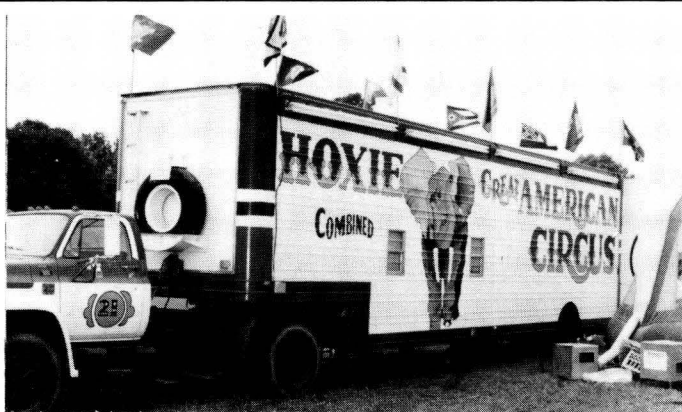
"Hill, who was also admittedly 'born into the circus business,' maintains a seasoned staff to help him run the operation. In addition to Moyer and Martin, the administration includes: Maria Rawls, office manager; Chris Rawls, concessions manager; Tim Sisson, head mechanic; Joe Frisco, Jr., elephant trainer; Dave Miller, electrician; Curly Thatcher, 24 hour man; Raynee Johnson, cookhouse supervisor; John Weathersby, big top supervisor; Cecil Baylor, side show superintendent; and Vanessa Towne, office manager of Hill's Harrisburg company.

"Show admission is \$3.50 for children and \$4.50 for adults on the day of the show, while advance seats are \$3 for all ages. The circus also travels with a three act side show that plays in a separate tent for \$1 extra prior to the main attraction, although on some rainy dates, as in Whar-ton, the side show was moved into the big top following the main show. Barkers and clowns also hawked concessions and programs throughout the performance at inter-missions.

"This isn't the same business it was when I started,' Hill reflected."

One of the elephants, Janet, stomped Tucker badly at Geneva, New York on June 5. The June 25 *Amusement Business* provided details on the accident: "In a twist of irony, L. B. 'Hoxie' Tucker, owner of Hoxie Brothers Great American Circus, was trampled recently by a show elephant while the circus was playing an engagement in Geneva, New York. He had raised the elephant from infancy.

"Tucker, who came onto the Geneva site when the circus played a pair of shows June 5, was reportedly helping load the animal into a truck driven by elephant trainer Joe Frisco, Jr., when the accident occurred. Allan C. Hill, manager of the Miami based circus, said Tucker turned his back for a moment, when the elephant took him in its trunk and threw him to the ground, then trampled on the 73 year



The Great American office semi in Levittown, Pennsylvania during the 1983 CFA convention. Arnold Brito photo.

old show owner. Before Tucker could be rescued from the animal, he suffered a broken pelvis bone and multiple bruises on his back. He was rushed to nearby Geneva Memorial Hospital, where he was expected to remain in intensive care for a week to ten days.

"Following his release, Hill said Tucker would most likely be flown by chartered plane to Florida quarters for an extended recuperation.

"The 14-year old female Indian elephant named Janet was one of four (the lone male is African) pachyderms Tucker raised from infancy. Like the other three females, Tucker named the animal for one of his granddaughters."

Tucker recovered enough to attend the July CFA convention in Philadelphia. During his comments at the banquet, he said: "I hope to pass the show on to Allan C. Hill, the only man I would let have the Hoxie title." He added, "I would like to have a clause in the sales contract allowing me to come around when I feel like it." Tucker's comments to the fans suggested that he and Hill had been dis-

The Great American midway in 1983. Joe Bradbury photo.



cussing the sale of the show during the summer.

Playing the South, East, and Midwest, Hoxie's Great American Circus had a good year. Increased phone promotion was given as the reason. Many of the dates in Pennsylvania and New Jersey were promoted by Allan C. Hill. During the prior five or so years Hill had managed the Great American show. On September 22, Hill purchased the show from Tucker, thus ending Hoxie's long association with the outdoor

show world. The sale included four year rights to title.

Ken Holehouse visited the show and provided this information in the October 17 *Circus Report*: "Allan C. Hill, producer, presents the 1983 edition of Hoxie's Great American Circus."

"And with these words, the opening Spec 'Circusland on Parade' was forming in the backyard; ringmaster Billy Martin had been introduced to the strains of 'Jesus Christ Superstar;' Noel Price began singing the spec music, the back curtain opened and another performance of the show began.

"The colorful red and white bedecked bandstand held a four piece ensemble of lively circus musicians. Charlie Moyer directed the band and plays trumpet--most often one-armed trumpet. Dave Miller was organist, a three year veteran of the band, John Brown, played a wild set of drums and Chris Price, with five years on the Beatty show under his belt, played trombone. One wondered how such a big sound could come from a four piece band? The night we saw the show, Lloyd Fengel was helping out on trumpet.

"The two hour show is staged in the European one-ring style with two side stages, in the intimate seating arrangement of the tent.

"After the opening parade, the first of an array of circus stars, Cindy Herriott, puts five poodles and a pony through their paces in a dog and pony routine. Cindy had great stage presence and was a pleasure to watch perform. She appeared later in the show with her horse 'Lady Dancer' in a display of dressage and high school horsemanship.

"Three clown gags were spotted through the show featuring the old timer Buck Nolan, the veteran Elmo Gibb and first of May Mike Ridenour as Happy. Their gags include a funny, superbly timed safe cracking gag, one

of the most inventive and creative tooth pulling gags I've ever seen with beautiful props and a can-you-top-this patter of one-liners exchanged between Elmo and Billy Martin.

"The funniest gag of all was the washer woman pantomime where everyone, including half the audience, getting soaked with water. Fortunately Elmo and Buck only do this gag in warmer weather and apparently try to use warm water.

"The Fairchilds, Sonya and Bobby, did several turns in the show including knife throwing, whip cracking routine and a well-executed sword balancing act with Bobby variously balancing a tray of wine glasses on a sword balanced from his mouth. He then walked up a stationery ladder and balanced an Olympic looking flame in like manner.

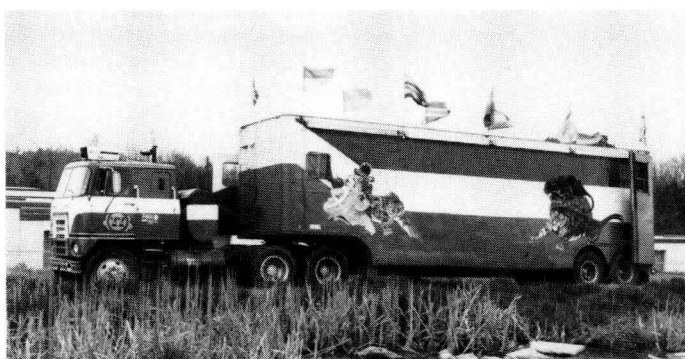
"Rosa Suarez as the 'Pearl of the Orient' does a hair hang routine. She later returned just before intermission with husband Enrico (Justino Loyal's old partner) and Timi and Denise Loyal and seven year old Maggie Suarez to do a superb bareback riding routine. Timi not only does a backward somersault from one horse to another, but also a backward somersault to the same horse.

"The second half of the show, announced for the most part by Noel Price, opened with Billy Martin on rola-bola doing a juggling routine. Bobby Fairchild juggled on one side stage and Sonya on the other. Both Sonya and Billy did some daring juggling of lighted torches.

"Timi and Denise returned in a cradle routine as the Valentino Duo. This pleasing display of strength and beauty ended in a helicopter spin with Timi holding Denise only by her ankle.

"Billy Martin returned with his gag Mongo, Bongo. Cindy Herriott swings far out over the audience in a cloud swing.

Elephants pulling Allan Hill's bus off a muddy lot in Southwood, New York in 1983. Don Kowell photo.



Great American elephant semi No. 77 in 1983. Joe Bradbury photo.

Earlier in the show, Christine had been featured on web in the aerial ballet.

"The show closed with three elephants put through their paces by Tim Mærikasch. Altogether a neatly packaged show.

"Some of the other personnel on the show include John Weathersby, boss canvasman; Marie Rawls, office manager; Chris Rawls, concessions, featuring some of the most aggressive butchering I've ever seen; Jim Ridenour, working in the office. And, last but not least, the delightful Jessie Moyer overseeing the front door.

"Side show manager Billy Martin does a strong pitch and brings the crowds in to see: Miss Electra (Sonya Fairchild); Bobby's Magic, Cecil Bayler with snake; Billy fire eats and worked a magic box with Cheryl Frey."

After selling his circus to Hill, Tucker went into retirement.

The Miami *Herald* published an article about Tucker on February 8, 1987 which said in part: "There is little comfort in such an unaccustomed role, and so he shifts often in his chair, restless with implications of idleness and residual pain of a disastrous disagreement with Janet the elephant four years ago.

"After more than sixty years as one of the last of this country's old-time traveling showmen, Hoxie Tucker, the crowds

and the exhausting, zigzagging roads behind him is retired.

"At 76, he has sat down and become a waver. In the space of an hour no more than four cars will pass this place. Wave, wave, wave. There is precious little strain or thought to such activity, and the brim of Tucker's straw hat—always a barometer of his temperament—is flipped contently upward.

"But this is spring, for the fourth year in

a row, there is no trip. Tucker is now officially out of the circus business. Most of his equipment and animals have been sold to other showmen. The last three elephants, Betty, Bonnie and Jessie, finally found new homes.

"Sure I miss them. Times I wish I hadn't sold them," he says, but that is sad and worthless talk at this point, and Tucker knows it.

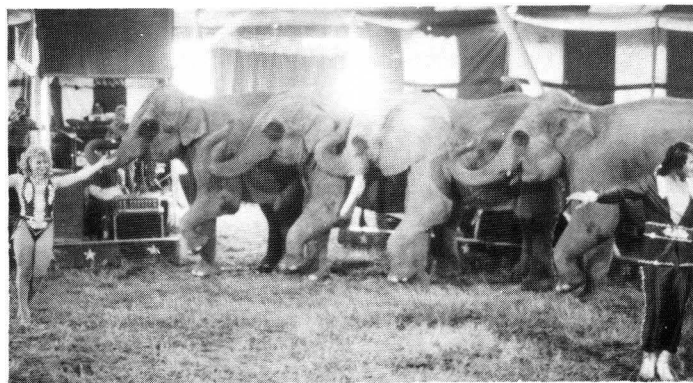
"Mrs. Tucker, she used to say, 'What do you want with that circus? You never get no money off it.' I've had five heart attacks and one nervous breakdown. On June 5, 1983, in New York, this pet elephant walked all over me. Just tore me all up. I spent 91 days in the hospital the first time and 28 days the second time. I don't want to go to work anymore."

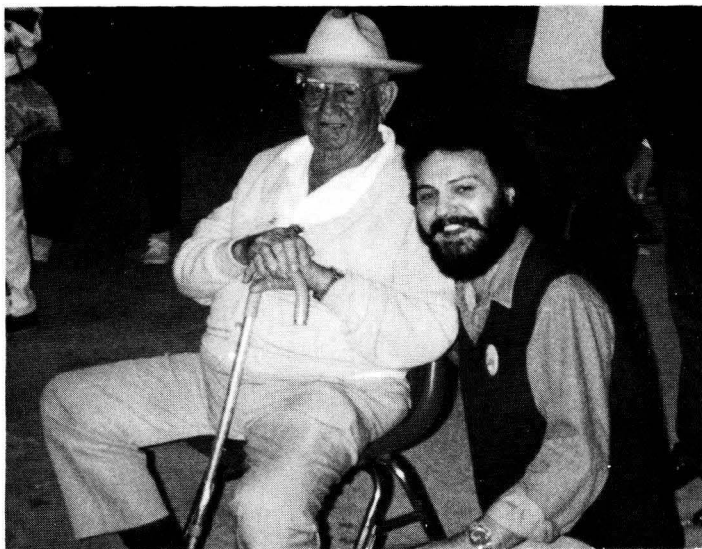
"Today, where the elephants once roamed there is only a single aging Doberman and some errant neighborhood peacocks that process regally up to the back door at dinner time. Tucker's wife, Betty, died on September 18, 1985, leaving an immense void in the old showman's life and a rawness in his heart.

"We were married 51 years and went together five years before that. I asked her to marry me, and she never did say yes. I had to call her mother. A telegram came back that said, 'If so desire, blessings.'"

Tucker will be recorded in circus history as the show owner who painted his

Wiener Herriott and Tim Frisco presenting the elephant act on Great American in 1983. Don Kowell photo.





Hoxie Tucker and former employee Mike Martin at the Sarasota Circus Festival in January 1992. Mike Martin collection.

trucks purple, used a one center pole round tent, and presented gorillas on two units at the same time. He presented the only black wild animal trainer in recent circus history and employed a black big show band director. He befriended hun-

dreds of circus fans across the United States and hosted three national conventions of the Circus Fans Association of America. He was the first to use circus fans as contracting agents. He employed such well known performers as clowns Dime Wilson and Bumpsy Anthony; riders Evy Karoly, Lucio Cristiani, Alberto Zoppe and Timi Loyal; and animal trainers Bobby Gibbs, John Herriott, Rex Williams

and Bert Pettus.

At age eighty-two Tucker is retired from show business. He lives in Miami. A couple of times a year he drives to Orlando to visit his daughter. Each year he visits Sarasota for the circus parade and Gibsonton for the showfolks circus.

Material for this article was provided by Hoxie Tucker, Bill Elbirn, Ron Bacon, Gordon Carver, Harold Barnes, Dave Orr, Bob MacDougall, Richard Reynolds, Joe

Bradbury, Lee Cavin, Albert Conover, John Goodall, David Reddy, Todd Robinson, Don Kowell, Mike Martin, Ted Bowman, Frank Mara, John Van Matre, Col. Ed Smith, Frank Felt, Charles DeWein, Michael Cecere, John Lewis and the Circus World Museum.



Do you have our current "G" catalog?

If not you are missing out.

We carry the best in "HO" and "O" Circus Kits, Books, Posters and collectibles.

We've got something for everybody.

Send \$4.00 to:

CIRCUS STAR SUPPLIES
3037 Grass Valley Hwy.
Auburn, CA 95603

WANTED

ORIGINAL CIRCUS, MAGIC AND WILD WEST POSTERS

TOP DOLLAR PAID FOR VINTAGE POSTERS IN ABOVE CATEGORY UP TO 3 SHEETS. WILL ALSO CONSIDER PRE-1950 BARNUM AND BAI-LEY, HAGENBECK-WALLACE ETC. ALSO QUALITY EARLY STOCK POS-TERS. PREFER PRE-1930 STROBRIDGE, COURIER, RUSSELL-MORGAN, OTIS, ETC. BUT WILL CONSIDER ANY QUALITY LITHO.

CALL, PHONE COLLECT OR FAX FOR OUR QUOTE OR YOUR PRICE.

MARIO CARRANDI, JR.
122 MONROE AVENUE
BELLE MEAD, NEW JERSEY 08502-4608
PHONE 908-874-0630 FAX 908-874-4892

New Year's Greetings

To all our Circus and Carny Friends



Al and Shirley Stencell

Royal Bros.--Martin & Downs--Super Circus International--
Century All Star Circus

New! Just released!

Tracy Heaston at the Calliope *Plays a Tribute to Merle Evans*

TRACY HEASTON

at the ★ ★

CALLIOPE

★ ★ ★



★ ★ ★ VOLUME FIVE ★ ★ ★

♫ - A TRIBUTE to



★ MERLE
★ EVANS
★



★ ★ ★

Tracy Heaston has been involved with music and the circus since he was a small child. At eight years of age, he played drums for Merle Evans. He played the calliope the first time under Merle Evans at age eleven when Ringling Brothers came to Los Angeles in 1969. He has been featured many times and is noted for his feather touch on the calliope. Tracy has a B.A. in percussion instruments.

Merle Evans was the bandleader for Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey for over 50 years. While conducting, he played his cornet as well. He conducted and played before more people in his lifetime than all other bandleaders combined. He was known as the Toscaninni of the Big Top!

Volume 5 is a tribute to Merle Evans in the fact that many of the numbers played were favorites of Merle Evans, including his own arrangement, *The Hungarian Melody*. Others are *Sunnyland Waltz* - *Olivine* - *Country Shuffle* - *Ragged Rozey* - *Royal Decree* - *Jungle Queen* - *Wedding of the Winds* - *Circus Echoes* - plus many more! This cassette is a real gem. No music or calliope lover should be without it, and especially priced at only \$8.95.

Star Circus Supply

3037 Grass Valley Highway

Auburn, CA 95602

Ship to _____

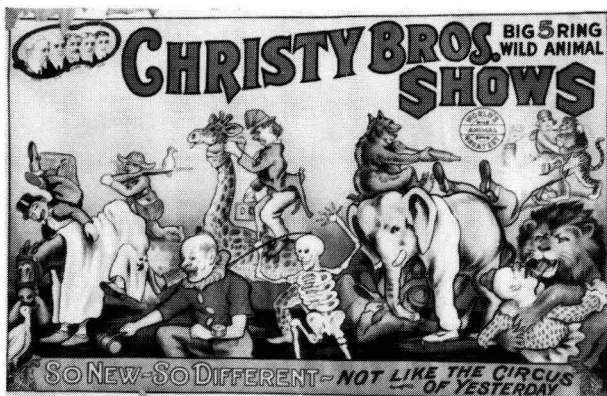
Street _____

City _____ State _ Zip _____

Quan. Unit Price Total Price

Volume 5		\$8.95	
Shipping		\$1.50 each	
Sales Tax (CA only)			
Total Due			

Dealer inquiries on these items invited!



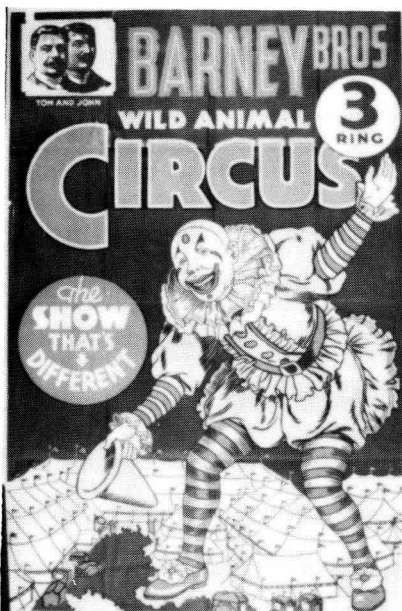
C-1928 Tibbals-Dunn collection



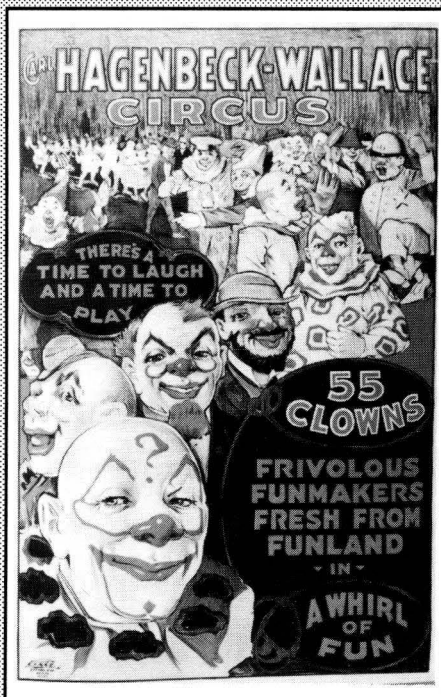
C-1930 Tibbals-Dunn collection

CLOWN POSTERS

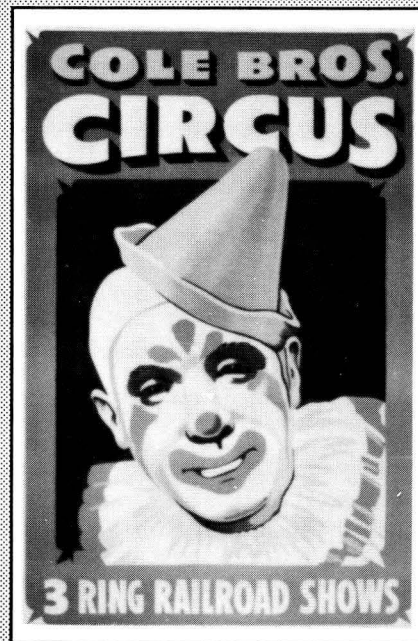
C-1923 Circus Galleries collection,
Ringling Museum, Sarasota, Florida



1935 Circus World Museum collection



C-1923 Pfening Archives



1941 Pfening Archives



1917 Pfening Archives

Bill Johnston contributed a number of articles to Bandwagon. Johnston died on October 24, 1992 at age 72, in Baraboo, Wisconsin where he was doing research for further articles. The following is his last article.

TOUGH CIRCUS ELEPHANTS

By Bill Johnston

Elephants are like people, there are good ones, and there are bad ones. Like people also, the bad ones get all the notoriety. Because of their size and strength it is fortunate that the bad ones have been in the minority. While the Asian male elephant has always been rated the number one tough guy, one of the toughest elephants ever imported to this country was an Asian female named Gypsy.

Gypsy was imported in 1867 by John "Pogey" O'Brien. She should not be confused with Empress, another O'Brien elephant. O'Brien sold Empress to the Philadelphia zoo according to the January 16, 1875 New York *Clipper*. Empress arrived at the zoo on December 31, 1874 and died there on August 2, 1875.

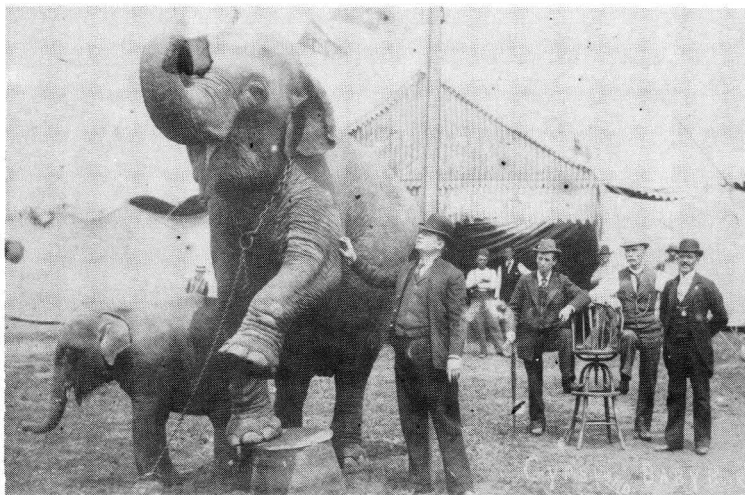
In 1888 Gypsy was sold to the Clark Bros. Shows, owned by W. C. and M. L. Clark. When this show went broke in 1891 she was sold to the W. H. Harris Nickel Plate Shows. Her trainer was first Charles Curran who was replaced by Bernard Shea. Gypsy had killed four men by then. Elephant men carved notches on her tusks as a record of her victims. Gypsy once killed a canvas man in Ronceford, Virginia. Five of the tent men were sleeping under the canvas top. At 2:00 A.M. one of the men feeling cold, got up. He went over to Gypsy and took some hay. It was a fatal mistake. Gypsy broke loose from her chains, and snatched the hay thief from the sleeper, then slammed him into the ground, killing him instantly. Shea was summoned by one of the tent men. When he came upon Gypsy, she was standing quietly, and readily submitted to being chained up. She had had her revenge and was satisfied. Gypsy had never bothered women or children, but apparently only went after people connected with the show. To all appearances she liked Shea, obeying his commands without question.

While the show was playing Chicago in 1896, Shea was away in Omaha. In Chicago an animal hand named Frank Scott decided he was going to exercise Gypsy. He had been warned by the show owner, William Harris,

to leave her alone. Scott went ahead anyway, mounted her head, and started down an alley. Gypsy caught him with her trunk and hurled him to the ground. Using her front feet she stomped the life out of him. Shea was contacted at once. He hurried back to the show to be greeted by Gypsy with happy snorting and trumpeting. She held him in her trunk gently, and appeared to be overjoyed to see him.

Later that year it was a different story when the show was playing at Smiths' Grove, Kentucky. The day was extremely hot, and Shea prepared to take Gypsy to a nearby stream, to cool off. He mounted her head and directed her to the stream. Gypsy entered the water calmly with Shea still atop her head. Suddenly, she grabbed him and shoved him under the water. Shea tried to get out, but every time Gypsy knocked him back again. Finally, he managed to wiggle out on her left side. Shea knew he had to gain control of Gypsy now or else. His method of subduing might be called brutal by many, but under these circumstances it was a necessity. After a long exhausting struggle, he won.

Gypsy and Barney on Harris Nickel Plate cr. 1900. Man at right in center is William H. Harris. Mary Wilson collection.



He led Gypsy back to the circus lot. Shea quit the show after this incident, knowing it was only a matter of time before she would kill him.

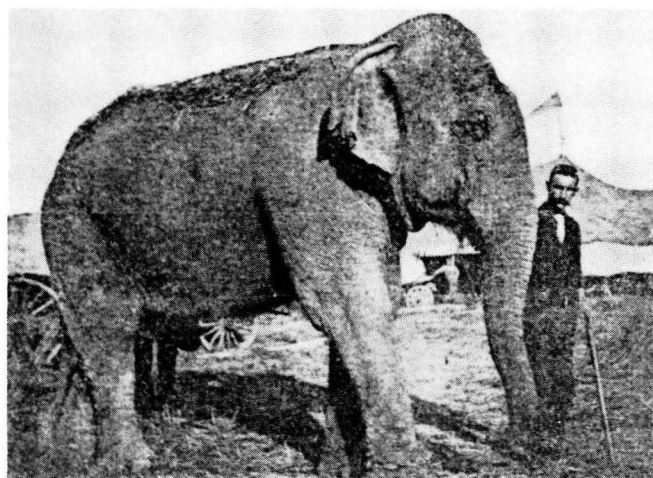
James "Whiskey Red" O'Rourke became her new handler. It was not long before he got a sample of Gypsy. O'Rourke was standing in front of her on a sidewalk in New Orleans when she knocked him down. She lunged at him, trying to stomp him with her front feet. Miraculously he avoided her thrusts and escaped. He suffered three broken ribs from

her attack, a short time later she got him again, this time dislocating his hip.

During O'Rourke's tenure an elephant companion joined Gypsy, a young male elephant called Barney. He was every bit as mean as Gypsy. Barney was an import like Gypsy, but the show advertised them as "mother and baby." One day after O'Rourke had a few drinks he began disciplining Gypsy. Barney became irritated. He waited until O'Rourke moved in front of him and then knocked him down three or four times. The situation was actually laughable.

In 1902 the Harris show made its last stand on November 23 at the Pine Park fairgrounds in Valdosta, Georgia where the show wintered. All that day, O'Rourke had been feeling ill, and had taken doses of quinine and whiskey. After the matinee he mounted Gypsy's head and took off for the show train to get a change of clothes. He remained at the train for some time, then remounted Gypsy and headed back to the circus lot. His head was swirling by this time. In his stupor he headed the wrong way. Some townsmen seeing he was going wrong shouted at him but he paid no attention. The pair passed Police Chief Dampier's stable, and he also noticed their mistake. He yelled but only got an incoherent mumble. Then O'Rourke fell off Gypsy's head. She hesitated a moment, then knelt down and proceeded to crush the life from his body. Using her trunk Gypsy then rolled his limp body a few yards down the street.

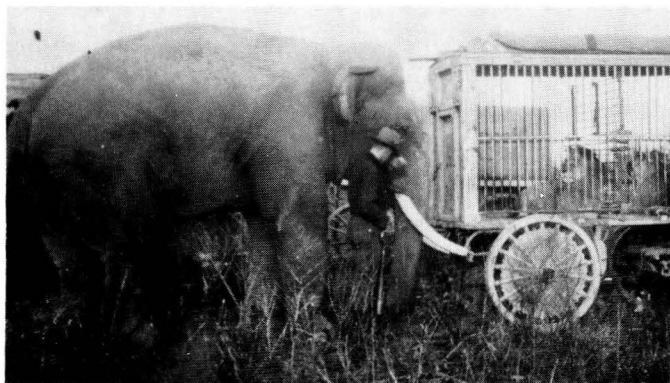
She stopped when she spied some grass alongside the street. Gypsy moved over to it, and began eating. Dampier, who saw all that had happened, realizing he could do nothing, went to the circus grounds. In no time, the circus crew was on the move in an attempt to round up Gypsy. Clown Bernard Shea, the for-



Mandarin the killer elephant. Author's collection.

mer elephant man, attempted to lead her toward the rail depot. A crowd had gathered near the show train. This combined with a noisy train that had stopped rattled Gypsy. She took off and turned by the Christian Church where circus hands were calling to her. Gypsy was by then in an angry mood. She shook a light pole knocking all the lights off then began tossing bricks and pieces of lumber through the air. Billy Menzer, another clown, was trapped in the church doorway. Gypsy pulled him out and hurled him some distance. She tried to follow up but other circus hands pulled him out of the way. He was taken unconscious to the Valdes Hotel for treatment. Shea was now by the church, trying desperately to get Gypsy's attention. Gypsy was master of the situation for over two hours, parading up and down in front of the hotel. Finally, she took off and made her way back to the show grounds. Chief Dampier and a posse followed planning killing her. Mrs. Harris had given the order to destroy her. At the show grounds Shea got up on the stand over the fair office. Dampier and

Black Diamond and Bill Woodcock on Monroe Bros. in 1925. Buckles Woodcock collection.



his posse were on top of the ticket office. It was then dark. Dampier drew his Krag-Jorgensen rifle and fired two or three shots.

Gypsy gave a squeal and was off, crashing through a fence in the back of the fairgrounds. It was 2:00 A.M. Dampier and his posse decided to await daylight. In the morning they located Gypsy near Cherry Creek. When she caught sight of the men, she moved out of sight rapidly. Dampier stayed on

her trail. When she came to a stop, Dampier moved to within 75 yards of her. Shaking, he steadied his rifle on a fence, took careful aim, and fired. Gypsy's life ended with that one shot.

Mandarin was a Jekyll and Hyde elephant. Most of his working life he was docile. He later changed and became a killer. He arrived in this country on July 27, 1871 and first appeared with Howes' Great London Circus. He went to Cooper and Bailey in 1879 where he sired Columbia, the first elephant born in the United States, and then Barnum and London in 1881. This circus became Barnum and Bailey in 1888, and Mandarin stayed with it.

One winter at the Bridgeport, Connecticut quarters Mandarin and a female Babe were taken outside the elephant barn to move some railroad cars. Mandarin would not cooperate and began rumbling. This got the elephants in the barn worked up and they started trumpeting and pulling on their chains. Pallas, a female, broke loose from her chains and joined Mandarin and Babe. This really got the herd in the barn going. Otto Mopus and George Bates, elephant handlers, went inside the barn to quiet them. The dwarf elephant Tom Thumb knocked them both down. Bates was badly injured. Mandarin finally had to be brought back inside the barn to stop the turmoil.

Mandarin's first victim was an elephant hand who he stomped into the ground. Freeing himself from his chains he proceeded to smash a hyena cage and snap a mule's back with one blow. The elephant crew stopped him by using trip ropes. Six months later he killed another hand. His third victim was seized in his trunk and

flung against a wall. Another hand tried to stop him with his bullhook but Mandarin easily grabbed him, and tossed him thirty feet through the air. Both the man's shoulder blades were broken.

Mandarin was with Barnum and Bailey when it toured Europe. While overseas, three of his fellow bulls were executed. Don Pedro was killed in Liverpool, England on May 15, 1898; Nick in Stoke-on-Trent on November 12, 1898; and Fritz in Tours, France on June 11, 1902. While the circus was playing at the Olympia in London, Mandarin killed George Stevens. When the show was loading at Dunkirk, France for the journey back to America Mandarin went into musth. He refused to enter his shipping crate. After a long and difficult struggle, using two big elephants, he was forced into the crate. Mandarin in a rage refused to calm down and broke some side bars on the crate. Word came from James A. Bailey that Mandarin must go.

The ship arrived at the West Houston pier in New York Harbor on November 8, 1902. George Bates, Mandarin's handler, refused to help in his execution. The job was assigned to boss canvasman John Burke. A two inch hawser was placed around Mandarin's neck and attached to a steam winch. The winch started. Mandarin succumbed after eight minutes. The crate was placed on a barge, and loaded with 5,000 pounds of old iron. The barge was then moved out to sea. About twenty miles off Sandy Hook, New Jersey the crate was dumped overboard sending Mandarin to a watery grave.

Black Diamond was a big impressive tusker, whose temper got the best of him at times. This eventually cost him his life. Gentry Bros. Circus bought Diamond and three other elephants from the Hagenbeck zoo in Hamburg, Germany around 1900. He remained with Gentry until 1913, and then was sold, along with the female, Trilby, to William P. Hall. Joe Metcalf, who was on the Gentry show, delivered the two elephants to Hall. By 1915 Diamond was part of a five herd with Annie, Alice, Lizzie, and Boo that year on Barton and Bailey, Wheeler Bros. in 1916, and R. T. Richards Circus in 1917 and 1918. They walked overland with Richards in 1917. They played Coney Island's Luna Park in 1918. Annie was then given to the Madison, Wisconsin zoo. The other four were sold back to Hall.

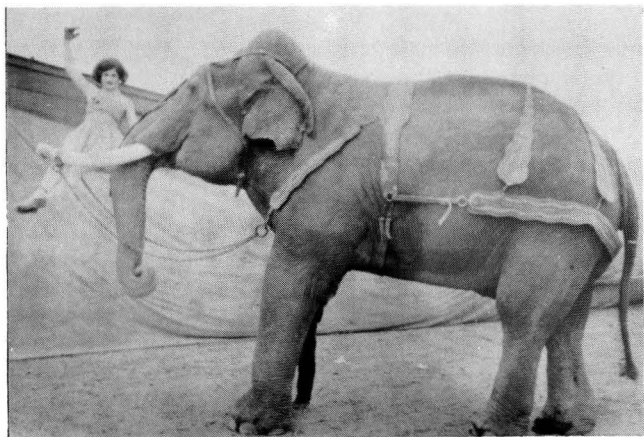
Diamond remained at the Hall farm in 1919. During the winter the elephant was sold to the Atterbury wagon show. This show was bought by A. M. Cauble in August 1924. Bill Woodcock was handling Diamond at that time. In 1925, the title was changed to Monroe Bros. where Diamond was called Congo. Ben Sweet, an old man who had been with Atterbury for

some time, was the only one other than Woodcock who could get around Diamond. Woodcock was eating in the cookhouse in Olton, Texas on New Year's Day in 1926. Ben Sweet attempted to change the chains on Diamond when for no apparent reason Diamond killed him. Wilson Fullbright, a nephew of A. M. Cauble, operated the show as Wilson's Greater Shows in 1927. Diamond was with it. After that he was sold to Al G. Barnes. Earl "Bullhook" Jackson was boss elephant man for Barnes in 1929, and Jack Grady was Diamond's handler.

On October 12, 1929 the Barnes show arrived in Corsicana, Texas. While the elephant herd was being moved from the rail yard to the circus lot they paused momentarily by some parked cars. Curley Pritchett, who had worked with Diamond on the Atterbury show before Woodcock arrived was standing by the cars. With him was a lady friend, Eva Donehoe. They began talking with the elephant hands. Donehoe reached to touch Diamond's head. In a flash Diamond caught Pritchett in his trunk and tossed him over the cars. Then he turned on Donehoe pushing her to the ground. He then ran his tusks through her body. She uttered one short scream. Pritchett escaped. Jack Grady quickly hustled Diamond back to the elephant car. Public sentiment against Black Diamond grew swiftly. The show managed to get out of town but pressure was brought to bear on the circus officials. The decision was made to execute Diamond.

When the circus arrived at Kennedy, Texas on October 16, Black Diamond was unloaded and chained to three other elephants and walked to a nearby farm. He was chained to three trees. His two forelegs were chained to a wooden block so he would be unable to get to his feet after being shot down. Five marksmen with high powered rifles took up positions six

Hazel Moss and Black Diamond on the Barnes show. Author's collection.



The execution of Black Diamond in Kennedy, Texas on October 16, 1929. Pfening Archives.

yards from Diamond. Hans Nagle, manager of the Houston zoo, directed the fir-ing. With such preparation one would think it would have been a simple procedure. On the contrary, these so-called marksmen fired over one hundred rounds before they could bring Diamond down. It was a sad ending for a magnificent animal.

It is sometimes said trouble comes in threes. If this applies elephants it could only mean the infamous trio of Tommy, Ding and Boo. They were a handful for the best elephant men. Before they came together as a herd, each had established a name for him or herself.

Tommy began as a youngster on the Gollmar Bros. Circus. When Gollmar closed at Frederick, Missouri on November 2, 1916, Tommy along with three other elephants, Dutch, Palm and Daisy, was sold to James R. Patterson of Paola, Kansas. Tommy was on the Yankee Robinson Circus in 1919, and then was sold to William P. Hall in 1921.

Ding Dong or more often just Ding, was on the Barnum and Bailey Circus in the 1890's. As a punk she was sold together with a male Charlie in 1893 to Leon Washburn. In 1897 after Washburn folded the two joined the John H.

LaPearl Circus. When this show closed they were sold to Ben Wallace. On April 24, 1901 at Peru, Indiana, trainer Henry Hoffman took Charlie down to the river for a drink and swim. Charlie decided to have some extra fun, and held Hoffman under the water, until he had drowned. Two days later Ding's partner was executed. Ding stayed with Wallace until 1907 then was sold to the Dode Fisk



Ding and Boo with Al Langdon on Campbell, Bailey and Hutchinson in 1920. Buckles Woodcock collection.

Show. After 1910 she was with Mugivan and Bowers shows. In 1918 Joe Metcalf had Ding and the female Mabel on the Howard Bros. Circus. This show had a short life and the two were sold to J. Augustus Jones. He revived his Cole Bros. show for a short run in 1918, but he died shortly thereafter. Ding, Mabel and a male Tex were sold to Hall by Jones' widow.

Boo arrived on the Ringling circus in 1903 as a punk. She got her first victim after being on the show a few months. It happened when a small boy began teasing Boo with an apple. Boo snatched the boy by the wrist, pulled him under her then pressed her body down until she had crushed his life out.

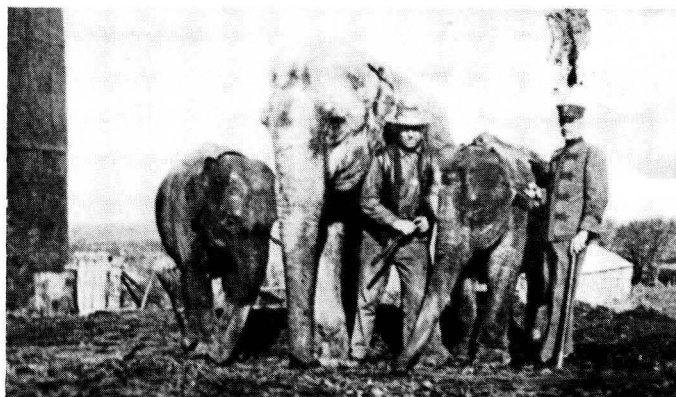
Nothing was done, as Boo was a baby, and the boy had been wrong in teasing her. On the Ringling show Boo was kept

with the large female elephant Veneta. They were advertised as "mother and baby," but both were imports. Veneta remained with the big show long after Boo left. She was sold to Hagenbeck in Germany in 1921 and the following year to the Frankfurt, Germany zoo. She was shot at this zoo on October 8, 1942. Boo was eventually sold to W. P. Hall where she became part of a five act with Annie, Alice, Lizzie and Diamond. She followed the same route as Diamond, and back to Hall. For 1920, Hall leased Ding and Boo to the newly organized circus, Campbell, Bailey and Hutchinson. Al Langdon presented the two in a new military routine. This circus was successful in its initial year, and went out again in 1921 and 1922. Tommy was added for the 1922 season. At last, the three were united, and would remain so.

Hall leased Tommy, Ding and Boo to Fred Buchanan for his World Bros. Circus in 1923. Langdon went along as part of the deal. At the time Buchanan owned two old elephants, Columbia and Ena. This show went to Hall's farm the winter of 1923-24 and opened as Robbins Bros. at Lancaster, Missouri on April 26, 1924. Joe Metcalf was in charge of the elephants. Boo went after Metcalf right away. Surprisingly he was saved from being fatally injured by the intervention of Ding. There were several elephant trainers on the show in 1924. After Metcalf, Dutch Wallace took over. Next came Spencer Huntley, and lastly on October 8, Clyde H. "High Pockets" Baudendistel. Tommy, Ding and Boo remained with Robbins through 1926. Baudendistel was Robbins elephant boss. Bill Woodcock came on the show in 1926 as assistant.

Tommy and Ding were tough elephants who would keep any man on his toes. Their trainers knew where they stood. This was not the case with Boo. She was cunning and could never be trusted. Boo gained the confidence of her handlers, day by day, all the time waiting her opportunity. Without warning she would attack with an unbelievable fury.

Ding was a good harness elephant. She proved her worth the summer of 1926. When the show was playing at Fort Smith, Arkansas two baby elephants arrived by baggage car. Their car was hooked to the circus train, and hauled to the next town. Here the two punks were moved into the circus bull car. This required most of the day, as these young elephants were real demons. Ding did most the work, pulling them into the car. Buchanan came on the show in Denison, Texas. After seeing the wild punks, he decided against buying them. Animal dealer



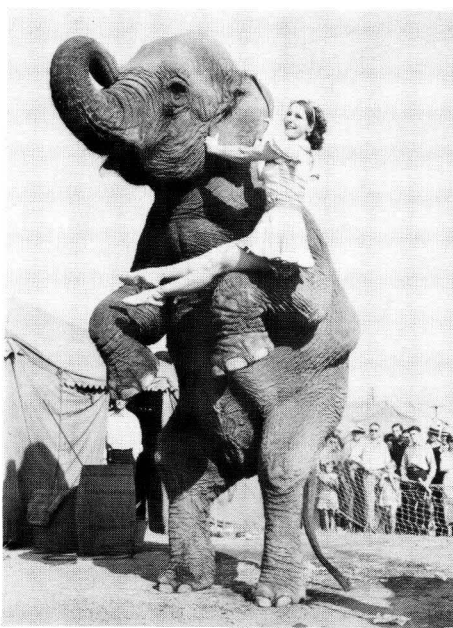
Tommy, Ding and Boo with Clyde Baudendistel and Bill Woodcock at the Hall farm in 1927. Buckles Woodcock collection.

Snake King was contacted and he arrived in Ranger, Texas. A boxcar was placed next to the bull car. Runs were stretched between and once again Ding dragged the wild ones out. The Sells-Floto Circus later bought these elephants. Sam Logan tried to train them but they died during training.

In 1927 Tommy, Ding and Boo, along with the big tusker, Major, were booked on the Cook and Cole Circus. It was a short engagement. The show opened at Manning, Iowa on May 21 and closed at Fairmont, Nebraska on June 1. The circus was stranded for five days. Two benefit performances were given to raise money to pay everyone off. After this Baudendistel and the elephants returned to the Hall farm.

In 1929 the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild

Boo with Jean Allen on Cole Bros. Circus in 1935. Author's collection.



West Show became the first circus to play the Chicago Stadium. They had their own herd of five elephants, but wanted to enlarge for this date. For this they leased nine elephants from W. P. Hall including Tommy, Ding and Boo. Woodcock was in charge. Each day the elephants had to walk six blocks from where they were stabled to the stadium. Along their route they passed under an elevated railway. One day as they were passing beneath a train roared by, spooking the herd. The handler with Boo attempted

to keep her under control. Boo would have none of it. She slammed him against a building wall, then finished him off. After that date, it was back to Hall's farm for several years. No one wanted to book them anymore.

In 1934 Zack Terrell and Jess Adkins put together their new railroad show, Cole Bros. Circus. They were buying all the elephants they could find giving Tommy, Ding and Boo another chance. Eddie Allen was boss elephant man on the Cole show. The two worked well the first two years. However, it was too much to expect Boo to be contained long. In 1937 she seized an elephant hand in her mouth and kept shaking him violently. It took several minutes before Allen and his helpers could pry her loose from her intended victim. The hand survived, but was crippled for life.

That was it for Boo. She was donated to the San Diego zoo along with her sidekick, Tommy. She never changed at the zoo and was euthanized there on January 1, 1939. Tommy settled down to zoo life, but was transferred later to the Griffith Park Zoo in Los Angeles. She lived there until her death in 1947.

In 1938 Ding was with the Terrell and Adkins second show Robbins Bros. Circus. She was on the 1939 Cole show, and then fate intervened to deal the fatal blow.

On February 20, 1940 a devastating fire destroyed the Cole winter quarters at Rochester, Indiana. Five of the elephants were away playing a winter date. Eleven remained in the quarters barn. Circus hands managed to get ten of the eleven out safely. Then one slipped back into the burning barn. The two who perished in this inferno were Kate and old Ding.

Elephants can be tough and some even killers. Mastering tough elephants is a real challenge. Some men will always be ready to accept that challenge.

My thanks to Lenore De La Vega and Melinda Priestly of the Hertzberg Museum, Richard Reynolds III and Bill "Buckles" Woodcock who helped me with material for this article.

AN ANNOTATIVE NARRATIVE
OF
JOE BLACKBURN'S

A CLOWN'S LOG

(As Compiled by Charles H. Day
for the New York *Clipper*)

An account of Joe Blackburn's and Levi J. North's 1838 visit to England; the leaping contests between the champions of England and America; their times with the circuses of Durcrow, Ryan and Batty; Blackburn's observations and opinions of the events of his day. Thoroughly annotated by the editor.

Paperback, 138 pp., Illustrated,
\$15.00 postpaid

William L. Slout
2995 Ladera Rd.
San Bernardino, CA 92405

WANTED to BUY

Old sideshow banners, ventriloquist dummies, carnival ball toss figures and other examples of hand-made circus and carnival folk art. Condition not important if work is unusual. Also interested in photographs of freaks that were sold by the shows.

Please write or phone.

Dean Jensen
165 North Broadway
Milwaukee, WI 53202



HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO JOIN THE CIRCUS?

Follow the real life adventures of
Tailpipe Shorty, with
Ringling Bros. Circus under
canvas. Meet Wacky Mac,
Chicken Charlie,

Straight Ahead Willie, Big Blue
and others.

For a copy of the new book
"He's Gone with "Poop" Dalong"
Send \$15 (includes postage) to:

David O. Crane
502 Harvard Ct.
Amsterdam, NY 122010



Red Wagons and White Canvas: A Story of the Mollie Bailey Circus

By Marj Gurasich

Almost everyone has a fantasy of running away to join a traveling circus. Jeremiah Colquitt did just that and became a protege of Mollie Bailey. Known affectionately by several generations of Texans as "Aunt Mollie," she ran the famous Mollie A. Bailey Show for almost half a century. She called it "a Texas show for Texas People." But the author's biography of this colorful lady entrepreneur is for everyone who loves a circus. The author, who grew up in Gary, Indiana, and now lives in Houston, not only researched the life of Mollie Bailey but also the traveling circus of that turn-of-the-century era. While the story reads like a novel, the author is faithful in depicting this storybook circus queen. Even Jeremiah, whom Mollie called "Cotton," had a real life counterpart. 5 3/4 x 8 3/4, illustrated, glossary of circus terms and extensive bibliography.



To order: Send \$11.00
(Including postage and handling)

To:
Marj Gurasich
2400 Old South Dr. Apt. 2501
Richmond, TX 77469

cus season and she did it with her own circus.

"The Sells & Rentfrow show starts upon its annual tour with a three days stand in their home town. The two performances yesterday were well attended and judging from the liberal applause given each act the show must have pleased. The troop of trained Shetland ponies did some very fine performing. The show boasts of a number of very good riders and trapeze acrobats. The contortionist and the tight rope man were both excellent. Mr. Sells himself has lost none of his riding ability from a winter's rest. The show gives a remarkably good entertainment for the price of admission.

"The street parade made a creditable appearance. A number of rare animals are carried, including a big elephant and four camels. The band rides in the finest chariot on the road. The show will be here today and Saturday, and all who wish to see a real, first-class performance and see some rare animals should not fail to see the Sells & Rentfrow show before it leaves our city. It will pay you well. The admission is only 15 and 25 cents."

A review in the *Journal* reported some details: "William Sells himself is the star, and the great feature of the performance is his leap from the ground to the back of his horse, Chesterfield, running at full speed. This part of the performance is always warmly applauded.

"Five Shetland ponies, well trained, give a very excellent performance in the ring.

"The double somersault leap over five horses and a fine exhibition of skill in riding by James Bell were greatly enjoyed. Joe Lewis, the contortionist, makes some difficult turns, and there are several good trapeze performers. Altogether the circus is well worth the small admission fee charged."

J. N. Rentfrow, Willie's new partner, was a third-rate producer of opera house shows. None of the handouts presented any information concerning him.

The *Journal* on April 30 stated that, "Sells' circus will go as far as Coney Island this season. They will be reinforced at Kansas City with six men, two lions and two extra carloads of paraphernalia."

The first road date was Lawrence on May 2. The *Lawrence Daily Journal* had two thoughts concerning Willie's show: "The circus parade this morning made a very pretty appearance. The horses were fat, the wagons bright and the costumes all clean.

"A circus that calls a dilapidated elephant and two care worn camels a menagerie is not much of a show, but it draws the small boy just the same."

The most significant aspect of circus day in Lawrence was reported May 3 in

the *Journal*. "The circus tents last night were just able to support the canvas after the heavy rain and not many thought it was safe under them."

"The Sells & Rentfrow circus was detained in Lawrence last night by a heavy storm," the *Leavenworth Standard* reported. "The mud was so heavy that the cars were not loaded on the Santa Fe until 7 o'clock this morning. There was no parade this forenoon and no show this after

The Big Railroad Show
—WILL POSITIVELY EXHIBIT AT—
BELOIT,
—RAIN OR SHINE—
Friday, June 24, '92.
Coming In Its Own Specially Built Train! 1-372

Sells and Rentfrow's
Enormous Combined R. R. Shows.
LARGER AND BETTER THAN EVER.



Sells' Combined Shows
100 Circus Performers, 10 great Clowns, Weird Moorish Caravans, etc.—natural illusions, Imperial Japanese troupes, united with J. N. RENTFROW's world's Fair, Metropolitan Museum, Geological Institute and Great Golden Menagerie. Two Great Shows Combined, making one of the largest shows on earth. The best performing Elephants, Sea Lions, Leopards and Baby Camel, 20 great Circus Acts, 3 great Bands in Street Parade, Courtly Knights and Dames, a drove of Monster Camels, Zebras, Bears and Baby Monkeys, 20 great Leapers, Richly Carved and Gilded Tabor Wagons, MALE AND FEMALE JOCKEYS—the best riders living. Every railroad gives Cheap Excursion Rates to this big show. At 10 a. m. a glorious, grand holiday

Free Street Parade.
ONE DAY ONLY, afternoon and night. Doors open at 1 and 7 p. m.
One Ticket Admits to All.
NO EXTRA CHARGE.

Sells & Rentfrow newspaper ad used in Beloit, Wisconsin in 1892. Circus World Museum collection.

noon. A performance will be given tonight [May 3]."

After the show had come and gone the *Leavenworth Times* reported that: "Sells & Rentfrow's circus which gave a performance on the reserve last night, did not attract a very large crowd and the entertainment afforded was commensurate to the price of admission."

Rain and mud caused the show to cancel the exhibitions at Atchison scheduled for May 4. The show moved on to Iowa.

Early in May stories began circulating

concerning the financial collapse of Sells & Rentfrow. The *Atchison Globe* ran a tale that was repeated in the *Topeka State Journal* of May 12: "The Sells & Rentfrow circus busted in Trenton, Missouri, on Monday, according to Louis Frost, one of the property men of the show, who was in town last night, returning to his home in Falls City, Nebraska. Frost says that on Monday morning, when he discovered that the show was about to break up, he went to Willie Sells, and asked him for the money which was coming to him, when young Sells struck him with a club, knocking him down. Sells then jumped upon Frost, kicking him in the face and ribs. Frost presented a horribly bruised appearance. His face was very much swollen and he had his left arm in a sling. Frost said he had had nothing to eat since leaving Trenton, and food was furnished him by George Hiller who lives in the upper Missouri Pacific yards, where the unfortunate man got out of a box car, having bummed his way to Atchison. Frost says six fakirs belonging to the show were arrested at Jamesport, where they tried to work a confidence racket. Frost also says rain fell every day after the circus left Topeka, except in Leavenworth.—*Atchison Globe*."

As in the previous season Willie tried desperately to mislead the public into thinking that his show was that of the illustrious Sells brothers. His uncles struck back when Willie billed Toledo, Ohio, for August 3. The story appeared in the *Topeka State Journal*, August 4: "NOT ALL PEACEFUL. The Two Sells Shows Making Much Trouble. Will Sells' Uncles Mad. Because Will Uses the Family Name For His Popular Price Circus—Col. Sells Tells the Whole Story of the Affair.

"There is a row between the two Sells' circuses—also among the Sells Bros, but it is agreeable to know that our fellow-townsmen, Allen Sells, and his son Will are not responsible for it.

"The Sells & Rentfrow circus is now in the east playing the large cities; last week it was at Detroit, Michigan, and this week it is at Toledo, Ohio.

"The *Toledo Bee* of July 30th contained the following: 'Willie's Uncles Are Mad. Because Willie's Name is Sells and He is in the Show Business—The Controversy in Toledo and Some Family History.

"The elder Sells are mad because their nephew William has the same name as the rest of the family, and persists in using it in the show business, to their detriment, as they claim.

"Years ago there were four Sells brothers in the show business. Ad Sells has a son Willie and he was taught bareback riding. Some ten years ago Ad left his brothers in their circus ventures, and settled in Topeka, Kansas, where he has

amassed quite a fortune in a hotel and other business enterprises.

"Willie stuck to his riding and became famous in that line. When Barnum went to England he took Willie along as his principal rider, and the young man cut quite a dash on the other side.

"On his return he went into the show business for himself, using his own name of Sells, of course. He is to show in Toledo this week. The elder Sells have posted notices around labeled "fraud," etc., which go on to state that "a small show adopts part of our title and copies our advertisements, word for word." The notices say a good many other things, but whether or not they do more than to advertise the younger Sells, and just what are the merits of this family controversy, are matters that don't count."

"Lewis Sells, one of the owners of the big show, is now in Topeka, when he was shown the above clipping by a JOURNAL reporter, he said: 'That is the first I have seen of that matter. Peter is in advance of the show and I don't know anything about it.' When asked if the Sells' Brothers show was coming to Topeka this year, he said: 'No; we are now in Missouri with the show and will go on east through Ohio and West Virginia.'

"He was not inclined to say much about the fuss with his nephew, and is evidently not attempting to fix matters up as he has been in Topeka since Monday night and has not been to see his brother, Allen Sells, Willie's father. He is stopping at the Troop and says he is looking after his property interests.

"Col. Allen Sells is taking his son's part in this controversy, and talks very plain about the matter just as he does about everything.

"When he was shown the clipping from the Toledo Bee he said: 'Yes, I have a copy of it. That is straight goods too, but it is not hurting Will's show any.' Handing the reporter the following telegram he said, 'Read that.' It read: 'Toledo, Ohio, August 3, 1892. Col. Allen Sells, Topeka: Turned thousands of people away for two nights in Detroit. William Sells.'

"Continuing he said: 'That shows how Will's show is doing. He sends me a telegram every few days, and he has been doing big business, turning people away almost every night for two months, in fact ever since the weather has been good. It takes a good show to do that, and he is going over that territory for the second

time, too. His show has been remodeled and improved since he started out, and he gives a ring performance now that is equal to any of them. He is not hurting the big show any either, and there is no sense in the boys making fools of themselves about it. Of course everybody knows Will could make them lots of money if he was riding in their ring, but then he ain't and they might as well let him alone.'

"This whole trouble started over those

THE REIGNING AUTOCRAT OF THE AMUSEMENT WORLD

Spreading a larger cloud of canvas, requiring more Cars, Coaches and Locomotives to move it, and engaging more than twice the number of Performers ~~and~~ working people than any other two shows on the continent

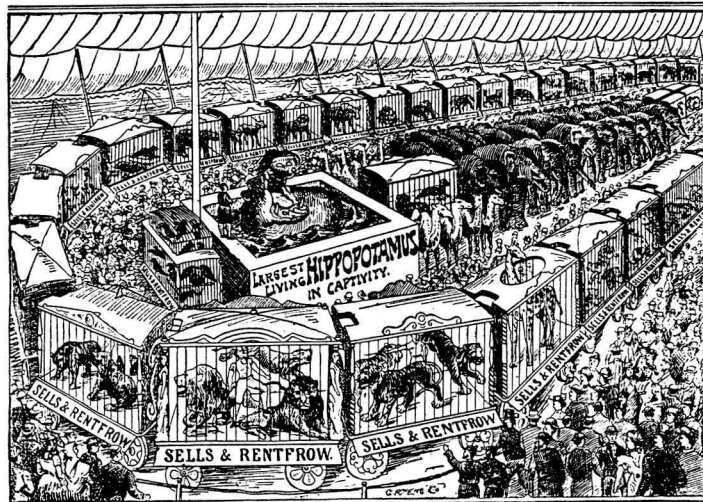


Illustration of menagerie from the 1892 Sells & Rentfrow courier. Circus World Museum collection.

"Japs." Will secured the "Japs," and made a contract to pay them \$100 a week. Hethen made another contract with Sells Brothers to perform the "Japs" for \$125 a week. That \$25 a week that Will was making was what did the business. Lew could not stand that. Will was working for them in the ring, and Lew thought the show ought to have the benefit of the \$25 a week.

"The result of it was the Japs got smart and broke their contract with Will and finished the season with the show for \$100, the same Will had been paying them, but getting it direct from the show. Will would not stand this and left the show.

"The next season he went to Europe with Barnum under a contract, and took the Japs with him. Will paid the Japs \$125 a week on that engagement and Barnum paid him \$150 for their performances.

"Will made a great hit in Europe and

made big money for the show, but they finally thought they would quit paying him the \$25 a week commission on the Japs and he quit. They did pay him up in full, though. m at the account was just everybody knows who remembers how quickly they paid it when Will attached the center pole of the big tent when they came to Topeka the next year.

"Will might now be performing in the ring for Sells' Brothers if they had only acted white. The next fall after his engagement with Barnum, Peter and Lewis were both out here. I was not very particular whether Will worked for them or not, but before they went away Mrs. Sells said: "Lew, have you got a place for Will in the show next year?" and he replied, "No, I haven't, my company is full."

"Well, I wasn't going to let Will lay idle, so I commenced preparation to put him on the road with a show of his own. After I had bought the cars, Peter came out here on purpose to make a contract with Will, but he was too late. Will got on the cars, and went down to Kansas City and wouldn't talk to him; like any other boy he would rather run a show of his own than work for other people.

"Will had a good show last year and made money; he had some little difficulty with his men last fall here in Topeka, because a smart lawyer wanted

to make a pile out of it. But the men would all have been paid anyway, and if Henry Call had not served the papers on me after midnight Sunday night, I would have had the show and all the men out of town; as it is, the men have all been paid and I paid them, as the records in Justice Furry's court will show; of course some of them did not get very much, it took most of the money to pay the court costs and the lawyers.

"But about this difficulty with Sells Brothers. There is no use in their acting the way they are about it. When their show came to Topeka a year ago, I saw Lew get off the train out here by the Rock Island depot. I started out to meet him, but he started back towards the car when he saw me coming. I called to him and said, Here, Lew don't make a fool of yourself, go over to the house and get your dinner and stay there while you are in town, and I will go up and help get the show out. Well, he came over to the hotel and stayed while he was here and I went up and worked for them all day in the mud getting their show straightened out.

"Why, you remember the time we had on the avenue south of Tenth Street with those wagons and elephants.

"Now here Lew is in town, but he has not cared to see me. He is up at the Throop. I have been asked why I don't go up and invite him down. Why, my house is always open to any brothers, they are just as welcome here as they are any place on earth, but if he don't see fit to come down and see me, all right. It is just as he sees fit, I am not going to run after him. Will could be working for him today if he would pay him what he is worth."

The *Kansas Democrat*, Topeka on August 10 ran a follow-up on the situation: "WILLIE IS MAD NOW. He Roasts His Uncles and Defies Them to Prevent Him Using the Sells Name.

"A few days since the *Democrat* copied from the *Toledo Bee* an article in which Sells Brothers severely criticized Willie Sells for using the Sells name in the show business. The *Bee* of a recent date contains William's 'come back' at his uncles. It is as follows: 'I dislike to indulge in personalities,' said William. 'I prefer to go on quietly about my business, but there are times when forbearance ceases to be a virtue. Perhaps my partner and myself should feel honored by the slanderous abuse heaped on our heads by Pete and Lew Sells, because they have treated such reputable showmen as P. T. Barnum, Adam Forepaugh, James E. Cooper and J. A. Bailey in the same manner. My precious uncles tell that we can not pay our bills; they will even tell that we have no license to be on earth. Pete Sells claims that Sells brothers possess all rights and title to the name of Sells. If I have no right to the name, how is it that seventeen years, boy and man, I traveled with Sells Brothers,

Sells & Rentfrow banner used in Rockford, Illinois in 1892. Circus World Museum collection.

The Big Railroad Shows

WILL POSITIVELY EXHIBIT AT

DODGEVILLE, Rain or Shine,

Wednesday, June 29.

COMING IN ITS OWN SPECIAL BUILT TRAIN

SELLS and RENTFROW'S

ENORMOUS COMBINED RAILROAD SHOWS.

Larger & Better than Ever.



100 Circus Performers! 10 Great Clowns! Weird Moorish Caravans! Supernatural Illusions! Imperial Japanese Troupes!

United with J. N. Rentfrow's World's Fair! Metropolitan Museum, Geological Institute and Great Golden Menagerie.

The Best Performing Elephants	A Drive of Monster Camels
Sea Lions, Leopards, Baby Camel	Zebra, Bears & Baby Monkeys
20 Great Circus Acts	20 GREAT LEAPERS
3 Great Bands in Street Parade	Richly Carved and
Courtly Knights and Dames	Gilded Tableau Wagons
	Myriad Cages, Dens and Lairs

CHEAP EXCURSION RATES!

Every Railroad gives Low Excursion Rates to this Big Show.

AT 10 A. M. A GLORIOUS GRAND HOLIDAY

FREE STREET PARADE!

One Day Only! ALTERNATION AND NIGHT DOORS OPEN AT 1 AND 7 P. M.

ONE TICKET ADMITS TO ALL. NO EXTRA CHARGE

Willie's ad for Dodgeville, Wisconsin in 1892. Circus World Museum collection.

ers, lithographed as a star and lauded to the skies by them as Willie Sells. When I was traveling with their show making money for them in return for a miserable salary, all was lovely. Now that I have gone into business for myself they go into the most deplorable business of trying to ruin a member of their own family. I claim the right as a free citizen of the United States to put my name at the head of our show, and I defy uncles or the whole world dispute that right. Uncle Sells is mad! Well, you tell him that Willie is mad."

The heat became strong enough that the title was changed to Sands & Rentfrow. Allen Sells explained the switch in the *Journal* on October 13: "The Sells and Rentfrow show, better known in Topeka as Will Sells' circus, is

being advertised through Indiana as the Sands & Rentfrow show. The word Sands is printed on separate sheets and pasted over the word Sells on the bill boards. When asked why that was done, this morning, Col. Allen Sells said: 'That is simply an advertising scheme; Will still owns the show. His uncles have been billing him to death, and Rentfrow thought it would be a good scheme to drop the name of Sells until the Sells Brothers get tired. Will Still owns the show, and it is doing a good business.'

Willie's war with his uncles was fought on a wide front. Geo. E. Stoneburner, an agent of the Sells Brothers' show, came to Watertown, South Dakota, and denounced Sells & Rentfrow as a fraud, according to the *Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, Herald*, September 2. Willie was waiting and Stoneburner was arrested for libel and ordered to stand trial at the next term of the district court. The outcome is unknown.

Willie never made it to Coney Island but the show did cover considerable territory, including Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Minnesota, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, closing December 21, at Jacksonville, Florida. Sells & Rentfrow wintered in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Ben Wallace got an early start on the season of 1892, as reported February 9 by the Topeka *Kansas Democrat* which mentioned that: "The Wallace circus and menagerie of Cincinnati, will play Kansas cities the coming season. Dates are now being arranged."

Among the dates arranged was May 9 for Topeka, but the coming show was not Wallace & Company, but Cook & Whitby's Colossal English Circus, Museum and Menagerie Allied with America's Racing Association. The season of 1891 with the arrest of Wallace & Company by the Kansas National Guard severely damaged the show's reputation and Wallace thought it best to present a new name to the public.

A. McPhail, Wallace's agent, was in Topeka April 21, placing advertisements and handouts with the local press while his billing crew covered over the postings of Sells & Rentfrow and the Ringling Brothers. The Ringling crew arrived a day ahead of McPhail. Sells & Rentfrow was the loser in the paste bucket war.

It is doubtful that Cook & Whitby's publicity fooled many circus goers. A great effort was made to convince the public that the show had been brought from England. A handout used frequently in Kansas appeared in the *Democrat* on May 4: "Cook & Whitby's Show.

"Cook & Whitby have brought their en-

WE SURVIVED THE FLOODS

SELLS & RENTFROW'S BIG R. R. SHOWS

WILL
EXHIBIT AT

ROCKFORD

ON THE FAIR GROUNDS
MONDAY

SEPT. 26

ADMISSION. 25 CTS.

tire circus and menagerie to this country, and reproduce their performance as in the Palace Garden, London. It took all the available space in the monster steamship Titanic to accommodate this immense circus organization. This is probably the largest show in the world. It is advertised to show here, May 9."

Another handout in the *Democrat* was a "quote" from the *Cleveland Journal*: "The following concerning the Cook & Whitby show, which will exhibit here Monday, is from the *Cleveland Journal*:"

"The Cook & Whitby English Circus and Menagerie, which exhibited here yesterday, was a revelation to our people of the possibilities of a genuine old world circus, and makes our well known and hackneyed shows seem very shabby and poor indeed by comparison. High class equestrian and athletic exhibition in the three rings and two elevated stages, new and never dreamed of by our American showmen, followed each other in bewildering succession, amazing and confounding the immense audience, while the numerous clown acts interspersed would throw them into convulsions of laughter and merriment. We cannot praise Cook & Whitby too highly; their parade, nearly a mile in length, was a succession of open dens, band wagons and blooded horses, all blazing in gold, silver and silk, their menagerie the most extensive one ever viewed, their circus and hippodrome performance immeasurably superior to any we know, or have ever witnessed. The balloon ascensions were successfully accomplished, while the various free exhibitions during the day would more than equal the entire stock in trade of 99 per cent of the shows that have ever visited Cleveland."

The *Albany Enquirer* was credited with the following report carried by the *Topeka State Journal* on April 27: "A Rare Treat.

"Prof. Wm. Goetzes band of 33 pieces heard here yesterday with Cook & Whitby's English circus, was without exception the finest we have ever listened to. Their rendering of the classical overtures of 'Wm. Tell' and 'Semiramide' delighted thousands at the afternoon performance and in the evening the magnificent strains of Wagner's tremendous 'Tannhauser' filled the immense canvas, packed to the ring bank, with enraptured auditors. Prof. Miller, our Albany maestro, states that there is but one other band in America capable of playing this music at all, and that is Gilmore's. To musicians we have only to say that this matchless organization is composed of 5 clarionettes, 2 flutes, 2 piccolos, 1 soloetto, 2 saxophones, 2 French horns, 2 bassoons, 2 oboes, 5 cornets, 2 al-

tos, 2 baritones, 2 tubas, 1 double B bass, snare and bass drum and bell player, and every man an artist. We have not space to mention the performance in detail, but will say that it was a century ahead of any other circus that has ever visited Albany and easily made its claim of being the 'foremost show of all this world.' A visit to it bestows a liberal education on its patrons.—*Albany Enquirer*."

THE GREAT WALLACE SHOW,
COMBINED WITH
COOK & WHITBY'S ROYAL ENGLISH MENAGERIE,
AND
AMERICA'S RACING ASSOCIATION.

— 1892 —

BOARD OF OFFICERS

B. E. WALLACE.....Sole Proprietor and Manager
W. E. FULLER.....Assistant Manager
BERNARD WALLACE.....Treasurer
H. W. AMLER.....Steward
WILLIS COBB.....Manager of Press
CHAS. H. SWEENEY.....Equestrian Director
WM. F. GOETZE.....Musical Director
LOU WILLIAMS.....Master Canvas
W. W. SCOTT.....Veterinary Surgeon and Boss Hostler
J. T. SWEENEY.....Superintendent of Menagerie
BENTON HUGHES.....Manager of Hippodrome
TOM BROWN.....Master of Transportation
BOB WEISS.....Master of Properties
THOMAS DURING.....Night Watchman
DR. HORTON.....Manager of Cook House
DON E. WILSON.....Mail Agent

PERFORMERS

GENTLEMEN

Chas. Sweeney.....Equestrian Director
Wm. Monroe.....Horse Trainer
Chas. Ewers.....Jockey Rider

Page from the 1892 Cook & Whitby route book. David Reddy collection.

Advertisements in all the Topeka papers boasted of, "50 Cages of Rare and Valuable Animals! A Herd of Elephants! A Drove of Camels! 100 Acts! 20 Aerial Artists! 50 Acrobats and Gymnasts! 30 Hurricane Riders! 3 Grand Military Bands! A Regiment of Clowns. THE FINEST HORSES OF ANY SHOW ON EARTH. Enough Trained Animals Alone to Equip a Big Menagerie! In our THREE RINGS, two ELEVATED STAGES and HALF MILE HIPPODROME TRACK. You will see everything you ever saw before at a circus but more that has never been presented to the American Public by any show excepting this.

"UNEQUALED! UNSURPASSABLE! An Exhibition, in Sublimity and Grandeur, never to be forgotten."

On circus day, May 9, the *Journal* was full of circus news: "Cook & Whitby's circus is in Topeka today. The show arrived

yesterday afternoon from Carrollton, Missouri where it gave its performance Saturday. The tents are located on the vacant tract between Harrison and Topeka Avenue, and south of Thirteenth Street.

"The managers of the show say that they have been playing in mud and rain for over a week and are thoroughly tired of this kind of weather. Notwithstanding the weather, however, they have had good audiences.

"The inside of the tents is being carpeted with hay, and a heavy board walk is being laid from the end of the sidewalk at Thirteenth and Harrison, across the street to the entrance to the menagerie.

"This morning when a *JOURNAL* reporter visited the circus tents, the candymen were arranging their booth to sell candy and red lemonade; the wagon boss was having the golden chariot and cages of wild animals washed for the parade.

"The property man was assorting the gilt and tassel wardrobes to be worn in the street parade. The three big elephants were quietly eating hay, and occasionally emptying a pail of water carried in by a small boy who was working his way in to see the afternoon performance.

"The musicians were testing their instruments and wondering if it would stop raining long enough, to let them get started out in the big band wagon. The canvas men were pulling the ropes a little tighter, while everybody else seemed to have his official duty to perform.

"The Cook & Whitby show has not been known by that name in this part of the country before this year. It was once the old time Wallace show, which went through Kansas last year, and was regarded an excellent show. Since then it has been fitted out with everything new and handsome, and now ranks among the big shows. Its winter quarters are at Peru, Indiana. Willis Cobb, press agent of the show, who is an old newspaper man, is a brother-in-law of Col. Allen Sells."

The *Democrat* gave Cobb his proper due.

"A RAY OF SUNSHINE. Willis Cobb Slides in on a Cloud to Herald the Great and Only.

"Willis Cobb floated into the DEMOCRAT office early this morning to settle the bill for the Cook & Whitby show. It was cloudy outside, but this fact was over-looked. Willis is like a ray of sunshine. His rattling, racy chat and his cheery smile are enlivening and entertaining and make him a welcome visitor whether he has favors to dispense or not."

The *Journal* ran the following report on

the parade: "Cook & Whitby's circus street parade took place at 1 o'clock on Kansas avenue. On account of the threatening weather, the men and women in the parade were dressed in rubber coats instead of handsome gilt and tinsel garments, which would have been worn if the sun had shone. The attractive feature of the parade was the large number of very fine horses, it being the best display of horse flesh seen in Topeka since the State Fair last fall.

"The cages of wild animals were not opened, but a little girl snake charmer with a large reptile in her hands was an interesting feature.

"Two bands and a steam piano furnished the music, the latter playing much to the delight of the youthful public, the now popular song, 'Ta-ra-ra Boom-ta-da.'"

"Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay!" was a tune played on every calliope that paraded in Kansas during the season of 1892. The tonal range and the rhythm were ideal for the steam piano. All the young people knew the saucy, "naughty" lyrics of this immensely popular tune.

"A smart and stylish girl you see,
Belle of good society;
Not too strict, but rather free, Yet as right as right can be

Never forward, never bold—
Not too hot and not too Cold;
But the very thing I'm told,
That in your arms you'd like to hold.
The burden of its refrain is: Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay. This should be repeated eight times."

The *Journal* made a few observations on circus day: "Cook & Whitby's circus has three elephants.

"It takes three tons of hay to furnish a meal for the horses of Cook & Whitby's circus.

"If you go to the circus tonight, fix the burglar attachments on your doors and windows.

"The man who superintends the putting up of the circus tents is called 'Fatty' and he has a small dog about as big as a ten cent piece.

"Willis Cobb, the press agent of Cook & Whitby's show called this morning. Mr. Cobb is quite the most original and successful circus press agent in the country."

Following circus day the Topeka *Daily Capital* reviewed the show: "IN SPITE OF MUD. A Circus Performance Produced. Under Great Difficulties. With Mud Six Inches Deep Around the Rings. Cook & Whitby's Circus is Given--A Good Performance Marred by Wet Ropes and Boards and Slippery Horses.

"There are very few things in life more disagreeable than walking through ankle-deep mud to witness the performance of a three-ringed circus. The man who took

his sister's six children to the circus yesterday is not likely to ever forget his experience.

"The Cook & Whitby show can give a rattling good exhibition when the elements permit. The elements were dead against it yesterday. The management say the show has been in mud and rain for several weeks, and the statement is easily believed. The tents looked as if they had been made up from a choice collection of printers' towels.

"The tents were pitched on the Harrison Street grounds. From the time they were erected Sunday up to the parade yesterday the rain poured into them. The parade, which took place at 12:30, was more like a funeral procession than the glistening spectacle this show can turn

DECATUR, FRIDAY, APRIL 29th.

The Foremost Show of All this World in all its Regal Splendor!

COOK & WHITBY COLOSSAL ENGLISH CIRCUS,

Museum and Menagerie,

—ALLIED WITH—
* America's Racing Association. *



50 Cages of Rare and Valuable Animals!

A Herd of Elephants!

A Drove of Camels!

50 Acrobats and Gymnasts!

30 Hurricane Riders!

3 Grand Military Bands!

A Regiment of Clowns!

THE FINEST HORSES OF ANY SHOW ON EARTH!

Enough Trained Animals Alone to Equip a Big Menagerie.

IN OUR THREE RINGS,

TWO ELEVATED STAGES,

—AND—

+Half-Mile Hippodrome Track+

You will see everything you ever saw before at a Circus but more that has never been presented to the American public by any show, excepting this.

Unequaled! Unsurpassable!

Cook & Whitby newspaper ad used in Decatur, Illinois in 1892. Circus World Museum collection.

out when the sun shines. The afternoon performance began about 3:30 o'clock. The animal tent was a sight; the circus tent was two sights. Mud was everywhere. The manager said it was the worst mess they ever got into. He said something else which wouldn't look well in print. With commendable enterprise and

more nerve a performance was attempted. In the grand entre the drum major appeared in rubber boots over white tights. The band kept time to the splash of their feet in the mud. The elephants would take one step and then slide several feet.

"The lady performers in this show have adopted a new style of wearing their hair. They have broken away from the traditional 'knob' which was worn on top of the head. These ladies appeared with hair reaching below their shoulders and flowing loose about their heads. The change is a good one and helps to distinguish them from the male performers. One of the ladies whose curly hair had been straightened by the rain wore white tights irregularly striped with the blackest of mud. Another lady had a streak of mud across her chin. They were pictures. Mlle. Somebody, the tight-rope walker, attempted to perform on a rope pretty well saturated with moisture. She made beautiful progress until she attempted the back flip-flop. Instead of turning over in the air gracefully, as she can, her foot slipped, and for a second the air was filled with hair, arms and legs. She finally lighted on her back in the net and slid off between two roustabouts, scaring them greatly, as they were not paying attention to what was going on on the rope. One of the boy riders slid off his horse and fell with his nose in the mud.

"It took a great deal of courage to attempt to perform under such circumstances, and performers did the best they could."

The *Journal* echoed the *Capital*: "A Circus in the Mud. Twelve Hundred People See Novel Sights at Yesterday's Show.

"What had been a beautiful expanse of green grass at the south end of Harrison street was converted into a vast mudhole by the trampling of horses and elephants and roustabouts of the circus by last evening, and the 1200 or more people who were bound to go to the show, rain or shine, found, when they got to the grounds, that they ought to have worn rubber boots. Everything was sticky and dripping with mud and water. A cold wind was blowing from the west, and most of the animals' cages were partially closed or wrapped up in canvas to keep out the chilly air. The tigers lay curled up in a big nest of hay with their black noses peeping out, wondering, no doubt, what manner of climate they had struck. The sacred yak with his fleecy shoulder cape was quite comfortable, thank you; the monkeys were huddled in one corner of their cage with a sad case of the blues, while each elephant turned up his proboscis very high in evident disgust at everything mundane.

"Willis Cobb was on the door receiving

the condolences of his acquaintances on the horrible weather. 'Oh, it's tough' but it can't last always,' said Cobb.

"An attempt had been made to build a solid path into the circus tent by piling up hay, but the path was a delusion and a sham. You step down on it, and down, down you went as if you trod on quicksand. Far away gleamed the white tiers of 'reserved seats' and for this haven the pilgrims set out hanging on by the 'life lines' stretched around the arena.

"The big tent was only half filled, and a large section of the seats were not put up at all. The band played briskly, the audience pounded their feet on the foot-boards and clapped their hands to keep warm, and enjoyed themselves as much as possible.

"The acrobats and acrobatesses, the equestrians and equestriennes, the trapezists and the trapezetrixes, came out in rubber boots, which they set in a long row, big and little, on the edge of the arena, while they went through their performance. Supers were kept busy wiping the water off the apparatus, and spreading hay over sloppy places.

"Four clowns made things merry, and splashed each other from head to heels with mud; horses dashed about with a noise like the splatter of a little stern wheel steamboat.

"Everybody tried to do his best, and the audience applauded enthusiastically, and seemed to enjoy the flying mud and the general novelty of the scene, more than if everything had been as it should have been. Out of consideration for the clothing of the spectators, the races were abandoned. Each lady and gentleman was not presented with a souvenir in the shape of a large chunk of mud from the heels of a chariot horse, as was the case at a circus which exhibited here last summer.

"Cook & Whitby have a good show, and we hope to see them here again under more favorable circumstances.

"There is one good thing about the multitude of circuses that are to come here this year," according to the *Journal*. "They pay the city a license fee of \$150 each."

From Topeka the show moved on to Emporia.

The parade at Newton on May 11 made a strong impression on the editor of the *Kansan*: "At the first strains of the band that headed the procession in a richly carved and gilded chariot, drawn by eight magnificent horses richly caparisoned, everybody sought a position where they could advantageously view the grand parade, which consisted of two bands, thirty dens of wild animals, 155 horses and ponies, a calliope, and numerous actors clad in new, rich and dazzling garments. It

was perhaps the finest display ever made upon the streets of this city."

The *Kansan* gave nearly as much space to Willis Cobb. "Willis Cobb. The gentleman whose name heads this item is one who has hosts of friends among the newspaper men, and is daily adding to the number. He is press manager for Cook & Whitby's circus, and the fact that he is an old newspaper man himself teaches him just what will please the boys. His first business after reaching a town is to visit

petitors. It was decidedly the finest that ever visited Newton, more especially the racing features. The horses were superb specimens of their kind and the riders at the head of their profession. Without doubt, the oriental races were the finest ever shown under canvas in this city. The balloon ascension was a glittering success, and more than met the expectation of the spectators.

"It is worthy of special mention that these shows are owned and managed by honorable gentlemen, their employees are respectable, well-behaved people; and the gamblers, fakirs and like obnoxious characters that are wont to follow circuses, are conspicuous by their absence.

"Mr. Willis Cobb, the press agent, an old newspaper man, is a host than whom none could be more accommodating. He possess that happy faculty which inspires everyone with the belief that he does everything in the right way, at the right time. His individuality is impressed upon the entire entertainment."

Barnum & Bailey's grandiose spectacle "Nero and the Destruction of Rome" inspired the entire circus world to incorporate an extravaganza of same type into their programs. In 1892 Barnum & Bailey produced "Columbus and the Discovery of America," but Ben Wallace had Strogoff's "Last Days of Pompeii," presented on a large stage "with over a hundred thousand dollars worth of correct costumes, scenery, armor, weapons, etc., actually three hundred in the cast."

The Hutchinson *Weekly Interior Herald* ran a handout describing it as "The most magnificent ballet ever dreamed of, Strogoff's grand triumphal procession, religious rites, choruses, ancient ceremonies, dawn of Christianity, tableaux, songs, dances, combats, feats, races, wrestling bouts, processions, ballets, gladiators, horseman, soldiers, slaves, etc. There seventy circus acts, twenty clowns, twenty-five riders, four big bands in the parade, eight tableaux cars, twelve chariots, thirty cages of living wild animals, six open dens, one hundred mounted people. All the show, undivided will be here. Thursday, May 12. COOK & WHITBY."

The above handout was always headlined "Wait! Wait! Wait!" The show cried "Wait!" when there was no competitor within a hundred miles.

After circus day the *Herald* remarked that, "It was too wet to plow, so they were all in to the circus Thursday."

The Hutchinson *Clipper* reported that in spite of cold, wet weather circus day was a huge success. Equally successful was Willis Cobb.

ATTRACTIONS	
Sapp. Ossified Man, in charge of Capt. James Warren	
Frank Howard.....	Tattooing Artist
Annie Howard.....	Tattooed Lady
James Morris.....	Elastic Skin Man
Princess Julia.....	Snake Charmer
Miss Ivy Howard.....	Snake Charmer
Karlo Tulo.....	Circusian Prince
H. Stout.....	Fat Boy
Prince Mongo.....	Zulu Chief
Prof. Marvelle.....	Magician and Ventriloquist
Miss Brown.....	Fire Queen
SIDE SHOW BAND	
Amos Rigdon.....	Solo Cornet
Bud Shavers.....	Baritone
B. Morris.....	Tenor
Walter Esby.....	Alto
Roscoe Shavers.....	Tuba
William Brooks.....	Bass Drum
David Barrett.....	Snare Drum
CANVASMEN	
William Watson,	Balloon Dutch.
George Spinney,	Th. Hutchinson.
AT THE FRONT DOOR	
B. E. Wallace,	Willis Cobb.
Al. Martin.....	Manager of Outside Tickets
Eddie Martin.....	Assistant
MENAGERIE	
80-FOOT ROUND TOP, WITH FOUR 40-FOOT MIDDLE-PIECES, 14 CAGES, 6 OPEN DENS	
J. T. Sweeney.....	Superintendent
George Bracken, {	Elephant Men
Joel Golden,	

This page of the 1892 Cook & Whitby route books lists an eighty foot menagerie top with four forty foot middles and fourteen cages and six open dens. The big top was listed elsewhere as a one hundred foot round top with three fifties. David Reddy collection.

the 'boys' and rejoice their hearts by planking down the round iron dollars to liquidate the advertising bills, after which he draws a bunch of tickets and compliments the force in each office, all the while keeping up a conversation that is both pleasant and interesting. We have met many press managers of shows, but Mr. Cobb more nearly meets our ideal than any other with whom we have transacted business."

"It is in the circus department," the Newton *Journal* reported, "where the Cook & Whitby shows excel all com-

"Mr. Cobb, the genial press agent of the Cook & Whitby show is a summer Santa Claus to the boys and girls connected with newspapers. He seems to have a fatherly affection for the whole fraternity and no attache of a printing office from the boy who carries out the ashes down to the man who writes the heavy editorials is over looked when he distributes his favors. Shows usually want \$25 worth of advertising for \$5, but Mr. Cobb believes that newspapers, like other business institutions, should receive full pay for services rendered and that, too, in cash. He has transacted business with THE CLIPPER each year for several years, and has always been the same pleasant, accommodating, generous gentleman."

Wallace curtailed gambling during the season of 1892, but did not totally suppress the thugs. Reports of sharp practices are comparatively rare compared to the year before. The Kinsley Mercury reported the exhibitions of Friday the 13th of May: "The attendance was very good, there being something over two thousand in the seats when the performance began. There was the usual gang of crooks in attendance that usually follows a circus and all of them reaped a harvest from the unwary. The sheriff and his deputies were vigilant and succeeded in gaining several disgorge but it was impossible to patrol the whole ground and in spite of their efforts the shell game and other devices of that sort got enough to pay them for their time."

The Kinsley Graphic reported: "The performance was given in the afternoon only, as the state of the weather prevented a night performance. The acrobatic trapeze and other athletic exhibitions were given in three rings at the same time, and were very good. The bare-back riding was not up to the usual standard of a first class circus. The concert at the close of the performance was as poor as it usually is. Several persons were swindled by crooks in making change for bills and, same lost money on the old time sure thing games that always make their appearance at circuses and state fairs. The show, take it altogether, while inferior to the great circuses that travel in the east, was as good as we can expect to see in this country and well worth the patronage it received."

No editor enjoyed Cook & Whitby more than he of the Norton Champion: "COOK & WHITBY'S SHOWS, The greatest day that Norton ever experienced was Monday last, May 23, it being the occasion of the Cook & Whitby circus."

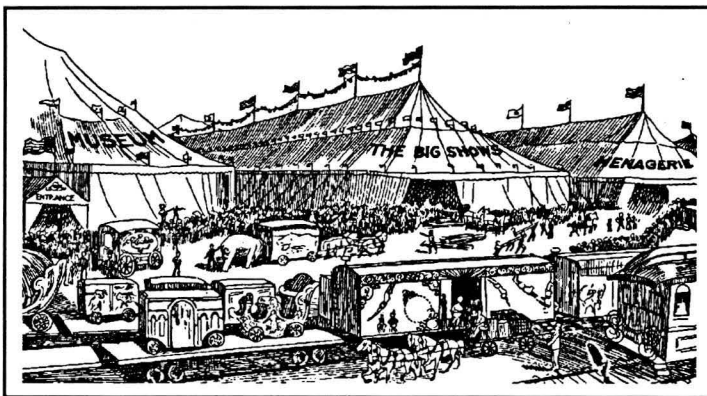
"The menagerie was a world of won-

ders and the sights an epoch in the interesting history of youth.

"Forty-three cars and two engines, three drive wheels at that, were the moving force, besides horses, elephants, dromedaries harnessed to golden chariots.

"No circus in our experience, Forepaugh's and Barnum's at their best in Chicago, a part of it too, has equalled that showed in Norton on the 23 inst.

"The shows and the performances were excellent.



"The races were unequalled by the American turf of blooded racers.

"The musicians are professionals and the management is composed of a troupe of fine gentlemen.

"THE CHAMPION desires to especially return its thanks to Willis Cobb, press manager, who is the foremost man of courtesies of all the world.

"At one time it was estimated by the managers that 8000 people were present.

"Norton gave room on that day to twelve thousand people, all of whom vote the shows magnificent."

Circus day at Smith Centre received scant coverage from Stewart's Bazoo for the exhibitions of May 24. The day was a triumph of sorts for the prohibitionists according to the Bazoo: "There were fully seven thousand people in town Tuesday, and there were not as many drunken men seen on the streets as an ordinary Saturday."

The only other reference to the show was the following sad tale: "It looks bad enough for us common gamblers to buck the shell game and other gambling devices which are always found with a circus, but when a man who is counted a good church going fellow walks up to the rack and bucks the tiger to the tune of 30 silver dollars it makes the old stagers sit back and smile."

The Belleville Democrat noted the gambling on circus day, May 25, and while offering no sympathy for the losers, reported citizens were taken in by the shell game. "The amount lost by different ones, so far as we have learned are \$50; \$32;

\$13; \$8; \$5; but how many more suckers were picked up, we can't say."

Cook & Whitby in the opinion of the Democrat was the best circus that ever visited the Belleville area.

The Horton Commercial speaking of the exhibitions of May 28, commented, "A more orderly or gentlemanly appearing set of people never appeared in Horton, the reports sent in advance to the contrary, notwithstanding. It is not only a first-class circus and menagerie, but a

clean, chaste and moral exhibition of the wonders of the world. Probably no other show traveling is so fortunate in having a press agent as is this one in the possessing of Willis Cobb who was the originator of extending courtesies to the press in every town where they exhibit, that are much appreciated by the newspapers and their friends. Mr. Cobb was with Sells Bro's. for many years, and it is due in a great measure to his skillful manipulation of advertising and management that Sells Bro's. accumulated their

millions in the show business. Cook & Whitby will be assured a good patronage should they ever return to Horton."

The last word on Cook & Whitby in 1892, was a paragraph in the July 14 Topeka State Journal which was thinner than it should have been: "Cook & Whitby's which was here last spring suffered a railroad wreck a few days ago and thirty horses were killed."

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera and Video, Topeka, Kansas.

NOW AVAILABLE ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN CIRCUS VOLUME III 1848 - 1860

In this, the latest (and last) of our series of books on the ante-bellum circus are chronicled the leaders of the institution: Rufus Welch, Spalding & Rogers, E. F. & J. Mabie, James Raymond and the Sands' group of impresarios. In addition, such phenomena as Franconi's Hippodrome, Barnum's Caravan, and the Floating Palace are described. Dan Rice's first shows are here, as are those of Joe Pentland, H. C. Lee, and Richard Risley. It was in this period that the circus reached the Pacific Coast and fourteen titles are documented. The railroad circus in its infancy (nine shows) is included.

The book has a 136 page narrative section, 147 pages of appendix (rosters and routes) and an 18 page index with over 1,000 names. \$30. postpaid. Available from the author:

Stuart Thayer
430 17th Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98112

Mike Martin's CIRCUS HOBBY HALL

2 BRAND NEW VIDEOS - NOW AVAILABLE

1. "1993 SARASOTA CIRCUS FESTIVAL"

Highlights of all the fun and circus excitement of Sarasota's 8th annual circus celebration!

- BIG TOP PERFORMANCES - WITH INTERNATIONAL ACTS
- FABULOUS OUTDOOR AERIAL & GROUND THRILL SHOWS
- OLD FASHIONED CIRCUS STREET PARADE IN SARASOTA

TWO FULL HOURS ----- \$29.50 POST PAID

2. "RINGLING/BARNUM VOL. 4"

Enjoy a marvelous behind the scenes look at this mammoth show in her under canvas heyday! Color and B&W film from the 30's, 40's and 50's!

- Rare footage of the Magic Names of the Circus - John & Mable Ringling, May Wirth, Paul Jung, Pinito Del Oro, Bird Millman, Fred Bradna, Lillian Leitzel and many more!
- Fabulous Side Show acts from the 30's, Goliath the giant Sea Elephant, Cinderella's Coach, Cleopatra's Spec Float and more!
- Sarasota Quarter's activity, loading & blessing the train, "Tack Spitters" at work, President Coolidge visits the show and much more!
- Never before seen film of the Cleveland menagerie fire in 1942, plus footage of the show just before the Hartford tragedy.
- The rarest, most unusual and most entertaining footage ever seen on the 'BIGGEST OF THE BIG TOPS'!

TWO FULL HOURS ----- \$29.50 POST PAID

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

CIRCUS HOBBY HALL

Dept. BW
16840 S.W. 62 St.
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33331
Fla. residents add
6% Sales tax

CIRCUS LIFE AND ADVENTURE OF ADAM BARDY

Every so often, story books are written that tell of someone who has lived an interesting and adventurous life, and there are times that some local person may come along who has experienced such an adventure in his life's journey. Of local interest is the story of Adam Bardy, who began his "adventure" in 1915, at the age of eight, running away with the great Buffalo Bill Wild West Circus, when the Circus was playing in his home town of Webster, Mass.

This beginning adventure was of very short duration, as Adam met up with gypsy fortune tellers the very next day, and, in their generosity, they gave Adam trolley car fare money, and Adam returned home.

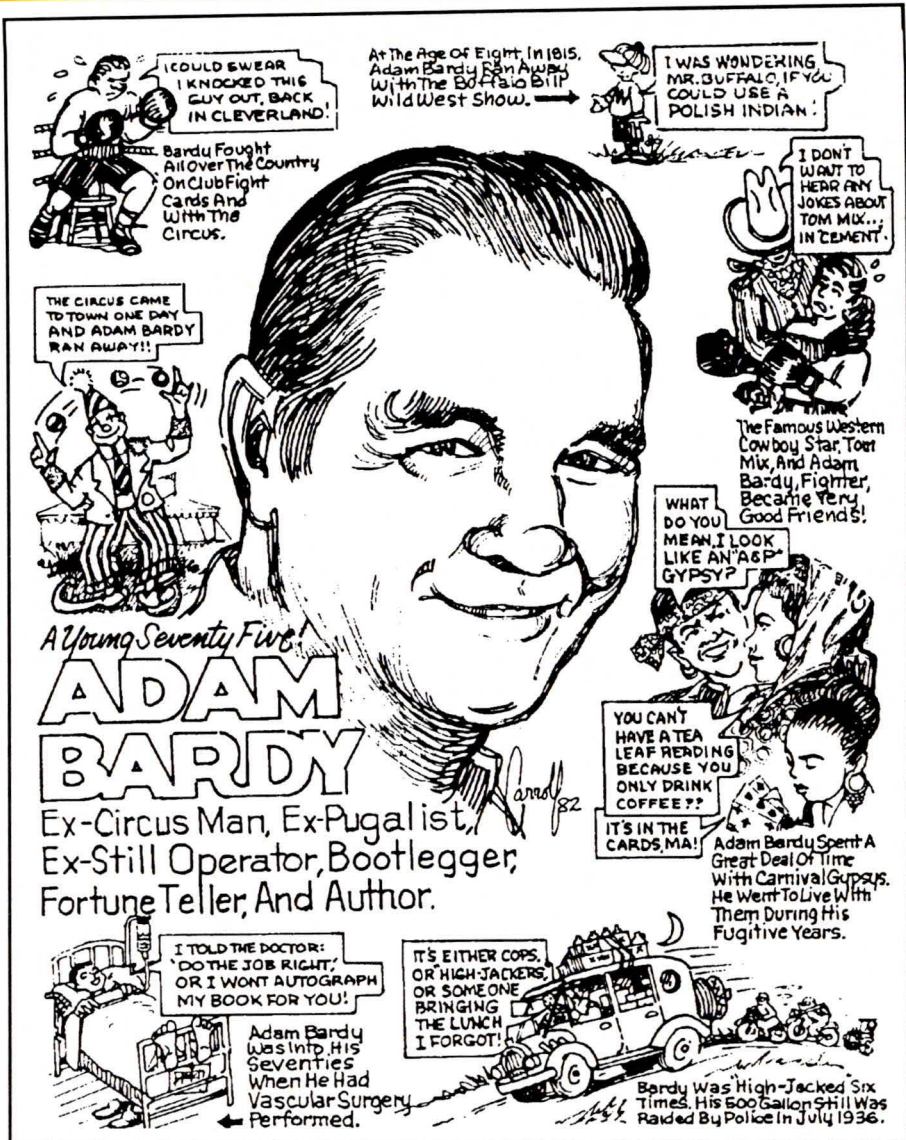
In Adam's teenage years, he lived with woodchoppers in shanties in the woods, and finally in a deserted farmhouse. At the age of seventeen, Adam joined the Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Circus. Other large and small circuses were to be Adam's life, until, in 1929, Adam met up with Kentucky Mountaineers, and the life of a bootlegger was to begin. A thrilling adventure as a big-time bootlegger was Adam's lot in life, until the Conn. State Police wiped out the operation. Adam escaped from custody, and a fugitive's existence lasting seven long years began. During this time, Adam learned all about fortune telling, a life he followed for many years. After that seven years, Adam gave up and turned himself in to the police. He went on to raising beautiful meat and show rabbits, and became New England's largest rabbit breeder. Then he went back to doing character readings, using palm readings and handwriting analysis by mail.

But, of all Adam's adventures, his memories of circus life were the best, including the opportunity to have had personal mends like the great Tom Mix, who joined the Sells-Floto Circus when Adam was with that circus in 1929, and Adam's interest in boxing, which his good friend Tom Mix really loved.

And now, as Adam lives his quiet life out in the country, he has written an interesting book that tells of his forty-seven years with his wonderful late wife, Ann, who was a devoted and loving mate. The story tells of what it was like to live with a fugitive and bootlegger husband all those years, and then of her passing in 1980. Adam recounts his loneliness for three years. Adam continues his story by telling how the palmistry reading of a young twenty-one year old girl blossomed into a wonderful friendship of true love and romance, as it can come to one who has lived an adventurous, interesting life. The story explains how, through deep faith in God, Adam could live this strange, unusual and interesting life, so full of excitement, and still remain the happy-go-lucky person he still is. Adam credits all this to the guiding hand of God.

The interesting life story of Adam includes that of his close companion, twenty-two year-old Terry Lyn Bates. Her story alone is well worth the price of the book, as one can see that age alone is not what counts, but the way we live our lives.

The book includes many pictures that tell the life story of Adam. For an autographed copy of *Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy*, send check or money order for \$12.95 to:



ADAM BARDY

87 Alm Rd.
Thompson, CT 06277